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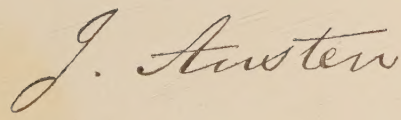
JANE AUSTEN

HER LIFE, HER WORK, HER FAMILY, AND HER CRITICS



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J. Austen

JANE AUSTEN

HER LIFE, HER WORK, HER FAMILY, AND HER CRITICS

BY R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON

Editor of Jane Austen's Novels (Everyman's Library, etc.), Author of "A New Study of Jane Austen," 1923, "Jane Austen," 1927.

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To

A. H. J.

Life-Comrade and Counsellor

JANE'S MARRIAGE

Jane went to Paradise:
  That was only fair.
Good Sir Walter met her first,
  And led her up the stair.
Henry and Tobias,
  And Miguel of Spain,
Stood with Shakespeare at the top,
  To welcome Jane.

Then the three archangels
  Offered out of hand,
Anything in Heaven's gift
  That she might command.
Azrael's eyes upon her,
  Raphael's wings above,
Michael's sword against her heart,
  Jane said: "Love."

Instantly the under-
  standing seraphim
Laid their fingers on their lips
  And went to look for him.
Stole across the Zodiac,
  Harnessed Charles's Wain,
And whispered round the nebulae
  "Who loved Jane?"

In a private limbo
  Where none had thought to look,
Sat a Hampshire gentleman
  Reading of a book.
It was called *Persuasion*,
  And it told the plain
Story of the love between
  Him and Jane.

He heard the question
  Circle Heaven through—
Closed the book and answered:
  "I did—and do!"
Quietly but speedily
  (As Captain Wentworth moved)
Entered into Paradise
  The man Jane loved!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

PREFACE

That our knowledge of Jane Austen's life and (so far as precise evidence from letters might have provided) of her thoughts and feelings, is so comparatively slight, is due in the first instance to her sister Cassandra's determined reticence. I question if she even approved, or at any rate really liked, the information given in Henry Austen's brief "Biographical Notice," introducing his sister to the public by name. It is well known that some time before her death she destroyed all of Jane's letters to her which were intimately concerned with family matters. What remained were left to Fanny Knight (Lady Knatchbull). When her cousin, J. E. Austen-Leigh, was writing the *Memoir* Lady Knatchbull was "too infirm to undertake the labour of looking through them and, without having done so, did not wish to place them in any other hands," so that he had no opportunity of examining them. Catherine (Mrs. Hubback, eighth child of Francis) also refused to lend him Jane's letters to her mother, *née* Mary Gibson, and these were afterwards burned, as Mr. Hubback informs me, by her younger sister, Fanny Sophia Austen.

In the *Letters* Lord Brabourne could only draw on those he inherited from his mother, Lady Knatchbull; except for the small, important series to Anna (Mrs. Lefroy) about her unfinished novel.

Thus, when various members of later generations had recognized that the public cared enough for Jane Austen, and understood her sufficiently, to value every available detail with discretion, they were compelled largely to depend on memories of childhood, family traditions, and

second-hand impressions from a few survivors, with a certain number of very important letters which had been preserved, not like those kept by Cassandra because they were, comparatively, *un*interesting, but because they were specially interesting and had been greatly treasured by their possessors.

The position was further complicated when biographies or memorials were being written, because, while everything in the way of manuscripts or property had been left to Cassandra, *she* felt she wished every one of her sister's thirty-four [1] nephews and nieces to have *something* that had been Jane's, and all were widely scattered.

The authorities on which we have now to depend are:

Biographical Notice of the Author. [By Henry Austen.] Prefixed to *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, 1818, and reissued in the first complete 5 vol. edition of the novels, 1833.

This has unique importance as the *only* character-sketch, or life, of Jane by one of her immediate family in her own generation and, though rather sentimental and coloured by the author's evangelical views, is written with a certain glow of feeling, not found elsewhere.

A Memoir of Jane Austen. By her nephew, J. E. Austen-Leigh, Vicar of Bray, Berks., 1870. Reissued the following year with "*Lady Susan* and fragments of two other unfinished tales" (*The Watsons*, the cancelled chapter of *Persuasion*, and a description of *Sanditon*, with quotations).

Recognized universally as the official origin or foundation of all the biographies. Though only a boy when his aunt died, the author was often with her during the last years, and had access, apparently, to all her manuscripts. His half-sister, Anna (Mrs. Lefroy), who was older and therefore more intimate with Jane; and his younger sister, Caroline, collaborated in the work. Items and information were contributed by others.

Letters of Jane Austen. Edited, with an Introduction and Critical Remarks by Edward, Lord Brabourne. 2 vols., 1884.

Containing such *Letters* to Cassandra as she had not destroyed; with two small but important series to the editor's mother, Fanny Knight,

[1] James had three children (a son and two daughters); Edward eleven (nine sons and two daughters); Francis ten (five sons and five daughters); Charles five (two sons and three daughters).

Lady Knatchbull, and Anna Austen (Mrs. Lefroy). Unfortunately Lord Brabourne was a careless editor as regards accuracy of text, and his notes are more gossiping than informative. Some of the letters were more correctly printed in the *Life and Letters* of 1913, see below. Others have since been published, and Mr. R. W. Chapman, editor of the Oxford edition of the novels, has nearly ready a final complete edition, collated with the originals, where these can be found.

Jane Austen, Her Homes and Her Friends. By Constance Hill. 1901. Illustrations by Ellen G. Hill, Contemporary Portraits, etc.

This charming record of a loyal pilgrimage to every spot associated with Jane Austen and her work, also contains new impressions largely quoted from the family MSS. These MSS. are mainly the unpublished "Memoir of the Austen Family," written by Miss F. C. Lefroy, who was, unfortunately, a little inclined to picturesque embroidery, and emotional assumptions, not strictly accurate in names and facts.

Jane Austen's Sailor Brothers: being the Adventures of Sir Francis Austen, G.C.B., Admiral of the Fleet, and Rear-Admiral Charles Austen. 1906. By J. H. Hubback (grandson of Sir Francis) and (his daughter) Edith C. Hubback (Mrs. Brown). 1906.

This contains, besides the detailed narrative of Francis and Charles, some very interesting fresh impressions and news of Jane Austen, including some important letters.

Jane Austen: Her Life and Letters, a Family Record. By William Austen-Leigh and Richard Austen-Leigh. 1913. Third edition, 1923, has some new material.

This final, complete official Life, by the son and grandson of the author of the *Memoir*, gathers together and checks the earlier work, and adds a great deal of important new matter. It includes a "Chronology of Jane Austen's Life," a "Bibliography," three Pedigrees and an Appendix on the "Text of the Novels"; with what one may call a more modern estimate of her character and work. The authors were naturally assisted by other living representatives of the family. Much of the *Memoir* is here reprinted, and many of the letters. Mr. R. A. Austen-Leigh is a nephew of William.

Personal Aspects of Jane Austen. By Mary Augusta Austen-Leigh. 1920.

A short volume by the sister of William, senior author of the *Life and Letters*, above; mainly designed to correct certain opinions of Jane Austen pronounced by biographers or critics outside the family. The author emphasizes the strength and sincerity of Jane Austen's religious feelings, her culture and intimacy with good society, and her love of children. It also contains a story from the unfortunate experiences of a friend of Jane Austen, which the author believes to be the "original"

of *Lady Susan*, some interesting verses by the author of the *Memoir* on first learning that his aunt was the author of the novels with which he was already familiar; and a reprint of the *Charades*, see below, p. 271, with other new information.

Jane Austen: A Bibliography. By Geoffrey Keynes. 1929. With facsimile title-pages of first editions and other illustrations.

There had been earlier, less complete, bibliographies, in the *Life and Letters*; by Mr. Anderson, of the British Museum, in Goldwin Smith's *Life*; by Oscar Fay Adams in his *Story of Jane Austen's Life*; and by Jean Lowrie Edmonds in the *Bulletin of Bibliography* (Boston, Mass.), May to August 1925.

Mr. Keynes supplies the fullest possible information on early editions, with the first American editions (1832 and 1833). Like his predecessors, he does not carry references to reviews (or criticism in periodicals) any further back than Scott's famous article in the *Quarterly*. In his section of French translations, of which one, No. 26A, is in Spanish,[1] the editions described do not reveal the significant fact that Mme de Montolieu's *Raison et Sensibilité* appeared in 1811, as her *Orgueil et Préjucé*, Henri Villemain's *Le Parc de Mansfield* and *La Nouvelle Emma*, Mme de Ferrières' *L'Abbaye de Northanger* and *La Famille Elliot*; each appeared in the year they were published in England. Full information on these points was given by Miss Rowland Gray in the *Nineteenth Century*, November 1925, and more briefly summarized in a recent issue of *The Times Literary Supplement*. There have been other translations.

Chawton Manor and its Owners. A Family History. By William Austen-Leigh and Montagu George Knight. 1911. Privately printed.

Intimate impressions of Jane Austen will be found on pp. 161–71.

In Periodicals

"Pen Portraits in Jane Austen's Novels." *Cornhill*,, July 1928. By John H. Hubback.

A most interesting article, disclosing some resemblances between characters in the novels and certain members of the family. None of these, certainly, are strictly "portraits," but characteristics and circumstances were used, most fully perhaps in the case of the considerable likeness between Mary Crawford and Eliza de Feuillide (*née* Eliza Hancock), a cousin and Henry's second wife. Francis wrote: "I rather

[1] *Orgullo y Prejuicio*. *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* have also been translated into Spanish. There is a Bibliography of French translations in *Jane Austen*, by Kate and Paul Rague, 1914, No. 238.

think parts of Captain Harville's character were drawn from myself; at least the description of his domestic habits, tastes, and occupations have a considerable resemblance to mine." Afloat he was not unlike Captain Wentworth. From many points of view Charles was the original of William Price.

A "Jane Austen Letter and other Janeana," from an old book of autographs. By M. A. Dewolfe Howe. *Yale Review* of 1925.

Correspondence concerning an autograph letter of Jane Austen's, sent by Francis to an early American admirer.

"Hunting for Snarks at Lyme Regis." By F. C. L.[efroy.] *Temple Bar*. November 1879.

A chatty account of Lyme Regis, tracing Jane Austen's own visit and scenes in *Persuasion*.

"Is It Just?" Anon. [By F. C. Lefroy.] *Temple Bar*. February 1883.

This is quoted, without stating date, by Constance Hill, and is mainly concerned with repudiating a charge of coldness brought against Jane Austen. It contains some details of Jane's "Romance," and anticipates the impressions developed from Miss Lefroy in many passages of Miss Hill's book. It remains anonymous, and is, accidentally, dated 1882 (with correct volume number) in Mr. Keynes's Bibliography. No. 292.

By the generous permission of Mr. R. A. Austen-Leigh I have been permitted to quote from the *Life and Letters*; Mr. Hubback, Mrs. Brown and Messrs. John Lane have also allowed quotations from the *Sailor Brothers*; Lady Pim, Miss Hill's executor, and Messrs. John Lane, have given me a similar permission with respect to *Jane Austen, Her Homes and Her Friends*. I have also most gratefully to acknowledge permissions from Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Messrs. Macmillan to print *Jane's Marriage* and a passage from "The Janeites" from *Debits and Credits*; from Mrs. Brinton and Messrs. Brentano to quote from *Old Friends and New Fancies*; from Mrs. L. Adams Beck (E. Barrington) and Messrs. Ernest Benn to quote from *The Ladies*; from Mrs. Brown and Messrs. John Lane to quote from *Margaret Dashwood* and *Susan Price*. Mr. C. B. Hogan, of St. Albans, Vermont, with the industry so characteristic of American critics, has traced, and generously put at my disposal, references to the earliest announcements, and first reviews, of the novels printed below, pp. 253 seq. and p. 266 seq., as well as to several interesting articles and books not elsewhere mentioned or discussed.

Mr. R. A. Austen-Leigh has also kindly answered several questions of detail; and I have had the advantage of personal impressions and

most helpful information on many points, in conversation and correspondence with Mr. Hubback and Mrs. Brown.

Miss Austen-Leigh has very kindly permitted the portrait in her possession of Jane Austen by Cassandra to be specially photographed for this volume. By the generous courtesy of Miss J. Lefroy I have been able to photograph the drawing of "Steventon," by her grandmother. Miss Hill's drawings of Sydney Place and Chawton Cottage are here reproduced by kind permission of her executor, Lady Pim, and Messrs. John Lane; the silhouette of Cassandra from the *Sailor Brothers* by kind permission of Messrs. John Lane and Mr. Hubback; the silhouettes of Mr. and Mrs. Austen from *Chawton Manor*, by kind permission of Mr. and Miss Austen-Leigh; the page from Sanditon Watson's MS., by kind permission of the Pioneer Club and Mrs. Leonard Darwin.

R. B. J.

August 1930.

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CHAPTER I

THE RECTORY

At any rate, until quite recent times, life in England has been so fundamentally centred round the home that the recognition of marriage as the aim and end of existence, universally adopted by our grandparents in fiction and in the world, was at once more liberal and less romantic than we are now apt to suppose. For marriage meant the creation of a new home, the revival of those happy days when every most intimate or trivial thought was shared among us, when the tears or laughter of one meant so much to all the rest: in a sense, maybe, marriage at least helped to fill up the gaps caused by death. There were always, of course, social climbers who thought of marriage only in vulgar terms of position or cash; always young girls, who may *not* have grown to be silly women, who dreamed fondly of soft kisses in a damp cottage or gallant knights on a noble steed; but normal, healthy-minded, young people pictured life more or less as they had always known it, with the responsibility to be now in their own hands; normal, sensible parents were on the lookout for eligible candidates for admission to the home circle, ready to warn off undesirables, to welcome the worthy and good. It was the absence of what made life secure and comfortable, a husband and children, that Jane Austen had in mind when kindly picturing the old maid; and I do not recall a single young man in all her novels who was not contemplating matrimony with more or less eagerness and enthusiasm.

Despite the determined reticence of her relatives we know something of what home meant to Jane Austen herself.

It was assuredly her neighbours, and not her own people, who supplied the materials for gossip, affectation, and meanness so shrewdly used in the novels; and much ink has been wasted in lamentation over the supposed isolation from mental stimulus in her life, and the so-called dreary, trivial nature of her enforced daily occupations.

It is true that though always, I am convinced, regarding and judging herself as a professional writer, Jane Austen had no opportunity, and very possibly no desire, for association with fellow-craftsmen, the exchange of experience or enthusiasms with official critic or journalist, any poet or novelist of the day. She never joined a coterie, a salon, or a club. And there were writers of no mean stature who have left on record appreciations of her genius long before it received the hall-mark of established fame, which prove they could have become friends she could have suffered gladly, might have been proud and happy to possess. What Jane Austen might have produced had hers been the experience of Fanny Burney among the wits or of George Eliot among the philosophers it were idle to consider. Something less rare, less perfect, less exquisitely herself, we would yet venture to believe.

But it is no less certain and worthy of observation that she was not tortured and driven in upon herself, as were Charlotte and Emily Brontë, to bind her genius and curb her imagination, for passionate protests of a lonely and weary soul.

Life gave her the opportunity, as genius bestowed on her the power, to express in terms of art the perfect fruits of a woman's mind and heart, without a touch of envy or hostility towards the proper masculine qualities and experiences: looking at man with clear understanding as an equal, there was no occasion to rival or imitate; holding him a little stupid in the subtleties of emotion, as one who had

never quite outgrown the naïveté of judgments formed in youth, but the natural guardian and instructor of the more quick-witted sex, to whom his love and friendship impart security and position in the world.

For whatever her freedom when mistress of itself may ultimately achieve, woman has flowered most naturally and completely in the home, and Jane Austen was a home-product: happy in so being, and confident that life was kind.

There was, I think, something rather rare and fine about existence at the Steventon Rectory, however normal and true to type its outward form; a distinction quietly borne, but comforting to its possessors, amidst the ordinary neighbours of a small, conventional, country parish: where, as Jane herself says of that perfect gentlewoman, Catherine Morland "(whose father was a very respectable man, with two livings, and not in the least addicted to locking up his daughters) there was not one family among their acquaintance who had reared and supported a boy accidentally found at their door; not one young man whose origin was unknown."

For those gracious heads of the rectory household, George Austen and Cassandra Leigh, the blood of their merchant and county connections had been refined by close alliance, in several generations, with brilliant members of our ancient universities: thus adding a natural polish to the dignities of the Church.

The ancient family of the Austens, originally—as their neighbours, the well-known Courthopes, remain to-day—great clothiers, commonly called "The Grey Coats of Kent," is said, in the county history, to have more recently become "of large estate and genteel rank in life"; that is, to have wandered from trade into the professions. Here we read of one "senior wrangler" and a "second wrangler," who was also "considered the best classic in Cambridge."

The Leighs, descended from Sir Thomas, Lord Mayor of

London, "behind whom Queen Elizabeth rode to be proclaimed at Paul's Cross," were associated with Oxford. Cassandra's great uncle was "Visitor," and her uncle Theophilus, Master of Balliol, a position always of peculiar prominence, ably maintained by his once famous pugnacious wit: another connection of hers, by marriage, was Principal of Brasenose. The Leigh arms were formerly to be seen on the old front of Balliol, towards Broad Street, as they are now on the new buildings of King's; and finally, through a legacy from her great uncle to one of her mother's family, the younger Austens—of Jane's generation, became "kin" to the founder of St. John's, Oxford.

This, as it happens, was also George Austen's college, chosen, of course, without premonition; and no reason has been put on record for his not following his relatives to Cambridge. The younger Austens were naturally Oxford men, while those of a subsequent generation, reverting to the maternal name of Leigh, went to Cambridge. The tradition of impartiality thus seems to be inbred.

George Austen's personal university life extended, with a brief interval of schoolmastering, over ten years: entering St. John's as a scholar in 1750, taking his M.A. in 1754, obtaining a Fellowship and, on returning to residence known as the "handsome proctor," taking orders, and his B.D. in 1760; but not moving to Steventon, though presented with the living almost at once, till his marriage in 1764.

Even then the cultural influences which are peculiarly academic, were not lost, for a conscientious clergyman, like George Austen, must be always taking pains over the composition of his weekly sermon, and be ever studying those two great English classics, "The Authorized Version" and "The Prayer Book of James the First." For many years, too, there were private pupils at the rectory, some of whom, like Jane's own brothers, he "took" through all the

usual school subjects, and "prepared" for the university. Henry long remembered submitting a "translation of a well-known Ode of Horace to his father's criticism," and the Rev. George could never have allowed his scholarship to rust. Jane "never heard bad grammar or slang."

The sisters, indeed, enjoyed several short periods of boarding-school instruction; I should prefer to believe more erudite than the "reasonable quantity of accomplishments sold at an reasonable price" by Mrs. Goddard; but their minds were trained by their father's learning and their mother's wit, with brother James or Henry always at hand to "encourage their taste, and correct their judgment."

That is to say, Jane Austen absorbed style by inheritance and environment from the home. It is this natural culture, not directly acquired from personal study, which explains the respect for words, the delight in their power, and the gift of selecting them, so conspicuous in one who was, in truth, a little careless about rules and formality, always colloquial in the turn of a phrase. Though she never indulged in moral or philosophical essays, her English is more pure, her choice of words is more chaste, than George Eliot's. Though she did not personally enjoy good, critical prose or great poetry, and has, indeed, committed a few startling errors of judgment, her art is universally admitted to touch perfection; "surpassing all the male novelists that ever lived," as George Henry Lewes long ago declared; while Southey and Coleridge found her "faultless"; and Mrs. Browning, though "struck" by her characters' "want of soul," added: "the novels are perfect —that 's certain."

The command of language, a pure vocabulary, the poise of a phrase, and our pleasure in words as words, with recognition of their power, are derived from familiarity with the classics, imbibed with the air we breathe at Oxford

and Cambridge. They were born and bred in Jane Austen from the first, making her always serious about style; and the fact explains that affectionate enthusiasm for her gay frivolity, often found and occasionally expressed, by men of profound scholarship or abstract learning, who are indifferent, probably, to all other fiction, save it be *Alice in Wonderland* or *The Rose and the Ring*. It explains, moreover, the fact, that when Dr. Verrall conferred his famous methods of textual emendation and conjecture upon a certain edition of Jane Austen's novels,[1] he achieved not only a masterpiece of scholastic wit, as well applied as to *Euripides*; but discovered also, in some instances, what Jane Austen almost certainly meant to write, but, for some reason, did not convey in print: contributing thus to the perfect text. That her style justified the effort, proves its foundation in good form.

Though, apart from Jane, never aspiring to authorship, the Austens were a family to whom expressing themselves by the pen was easy and natural: a gift not very happily represented by the slim volume of *Charades, etc., Written a Hundred Years Ago, by Jane Austen and her Family*, 1895; which has little interest outside its power to remind us of Mr. Woodhouse. No doubt the rector was an elegant preacher, and turned out many a polished essay in his time. Mrs. Austen wrote excellent letters in prose or "playful" rhyming, "common-sense." It was not for nothing, I am persuaded, that Jane pronounced Cassandra "the finest comic writer of the present age." When James, like his father, returned to Oxford as a young Fellow of his college, he started and wrote much in *The Loiterer*,[2] a university periodical,

[1] "On the Printing of Jane Austen's Novels"—*Cambridge Observer*, November 15, 1892; "On Some Passages in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*"—*Cambridge Review*, November 30 and December 7, 1893.

[2] He had previously written verse prologues to *The Rivals* and other plays for family private theatricals.

presenting a "rough, but not entirely inaccurate sketch of the character, the manners, and the amusements of Oxford, at the close of the eighteenth century": intended in part, like the *Spectator*, to reform by ridicule, that his readers might see their follies in the mirrors provided for them in his page. Henry, still an undergraduate, contributed some clever articles, and both are proved thereby fairly expert in Addisonian prose.[1] Frank's thirteen-page letter to his fiancée, "while on active service," recording the death of Nelson, is every way worthy of the occasion; and the "private note-book" he kept for so many years reveals some share of the family humour, while supplementing the clear light thrown by his official logs, private letters, and "communications" to authority, upon those fateful years in the history of our navy, with a love of detail so closely paralleled in all Jane's work. It was he and Charles, of course, who put her wise to all service etiquette. How far, and in what directions, the writing habit survived the authoress of *Persuasion* will be expounded with care below.[2]

In later generations they continued writing books and entering the family professions. At Steventon the Rev. George was succeeded by his son (James), and his grandson (William Knight); Henry took orders in later life; three of the Knights were Rectors of Chawton; the Austen-Leighs are honoured at Eton and King's; Charles had two sons in the Navy.

There were other influences, naturally, at Steventon which contributed to Jane Austen's character and the characteristics of her work. Practically all old families were large families, and the habit of marrying twice—itself a strong witness to love of home (which continued in Jane's own generation)—introduced many new members to the clan; while the changing names with property

[1] See extracts printed below, pp. 216 seq.

[2] See Appendix B.

inherited further complicates the understanding of relations. Among those most frequently named in the "Life" and "Letters," the Knights and Knatchbulls (from whom we have later Lord Brabourne), the Walters, the Hancocks (with Countess Feuillide), on the Austen side; the Cookes, the Bridges, the Perrots, the Leigh Perrots, and the Coopers, among the Leighs; are all, as it were, within the family circle. The Lefroys and Lloyds (introducing the Rev. Fowle) were in the first instance only friends, and they married into the family. Among the younger set we meet the Austen-Leighs, the Hubbacks, Mrs. Saunders, Mrs. Bellas, and Mrs. Brown; and, though at the rectory it was the daughters who did not marry, the name of Austen appears to be dying out.

Inevitably so large a group was more or less sufficient unto itself. Well varied within and personally concerned with more than one sphere of activity, it could not fairly be called narrow, but it had, unquestionably, a certain natural tendency to be exclusive. In the language of their day and generation the Austens were, and felt themselves to be, superior folk: as a large family in a small neighbourhood may easily become; especially when, as at Steventon, the rector was, in effect, often compelled to deputize for a non-resident squire.

There were others, no doubt, in a similar position elsewhere; but few, surely, could have remained long so closely knit in such perfect accord. One Austen did not support, or admire, another for the name's sake; but because he cared and understood. They held the secret of each going his own way, and yet, or rather perhaps for that very reason, remaining at one. The rector and his wife were neither strict nor domineering parents we may be sure; guiding rather by example and personality than by rule and precept. Wherefore their children found no occasion for revolt or

wrangling or for a search after wider ways; relatives, near or distant, rich and poor alike, turned to Steventon for the gaiety and comfort of a settled, peaceful home.

I am not attempting any "pictures of perfection," such as made Jane "sick and wicked." Save Jane herself, these people were neither outstanding nor unique; but they did combine to sustain the genial serenity of her nature, to give her a full and happy life. From the first her heart was warmed towards humanity, her mind was stimulated to thought; by the easiest, most natural and healthy means, by companions of the fireside. Love of nonsense and fun, for all were blessed, luckily, with a sense of humour, faith in fresh air and exercise, naturally refined but unaffected speech, deep but controlled emotion, business without fuss, gossiping without scandal, were familiar items of the daily round. They visited and entertained their neighbours, danced and flirted at the assemblies, corresponded with absent friends; and however much a party or excursion was enjoyed, were always glad to be again at home.

It was the wedding of culture with domesticity that gave birth to Jane Austen and her works: genius was fairy godmother to the child.

The superficial limitations of Jane Austen's life were so obvious; the miracle of her art, who never even met a fellow-artist, has been so widely canvassed; her cunning in forcing our delighted attention upon chronicles of incredibly small beer has been continually regretted though admired; the intellectual isolation in which her days have been often assumed to have passed, provokes such generous and genuine commiseration; that it is well to attempt a somewhat different picture.

Every line Jane Austen wrote is stamped with an individuality all her own; but that individuality must have been differently expressed, if with equal power, had her family

and her life been other than they were. They have their part in its matter, its spirit, and its form; that part was favourable and kind, both to the author and her books.

It was the spirit of Steventon in *Northanger Abbey*, in *Pride and Prejudice*, and in *Persuasion*, that made Miss Thackeray exclaim: "Dear books, bright, sparkling with wit and animation, in which the homely heroines charm, the dull hours fly, and the very bores enchant us."

Jane obviously *used* her family in more than one situation that is repeated in different novels: the deep and understanding love between two sisters that she had experienced with Cassandra; the love of sailors and enthusiasm for the Navy inspired by Frank and Charles; the sympathy with young men who are going into the Church; the virtues and charm of young men like Henry Tilney and Edmund Bertram, who are adepts at training the minds of a young girl; the manners of Bath; the beauties of Lyme Regis. There is a clear echo of Steventon and the Austens in the neat opening description of Catherine Morland's family; James is said to have recognized himself in Captain Harville, as William Price certainly derives much from Charles; Edward, like Henry Crawford, was an experienced adept in landscape gardening, and as great "a blessing to all the juvenile part of the neighbourhood" as Sir John Middleton himself. And, as Mr. Hubback (grandson of Admiral James) has lately revealed, there was much in common of nature and circumstances between Mary Crawford and Eliza Hancock, afterwards Comtesse de Feuillide, and later Mrs. Henry Austen.

None of these, of course, are portraits. "I am too proud of my gentlemen to admit they were only Mr. A. or Colonel B." And, for obvious reasons she never employs a large, and *completely* united, family group. Her own home could not supply the drama of life, the wit built on contrasts, the

comic figures for character-parts, the misunderstandings essential to the course of true love, the villains, the vulgarians, and the fools. Indeed, she gaily accepts the convention for heroines of decided superiority to family and home, save for the chosen soul-mate; and shows little or no respect for parental authority; though strangely enough every leading family *welcomes* the son's wives, as did the Austens, a grave omission of opportunity for the conflict of emotions. The spirit of home invades, and controls, the picture; cheerful humour defines the outlook; happiness is assured the lovers in the end: a happiness derived alike from excellence of heart and mind — unpretentious and domestic, simple-minded and sincere.

Finally, Jane Austen, like the Dashwoods and Anne Elliot, was keenly susceptible to the material aspects and what one may call the feeling of home. She is said to have fainted on suddenly hearing of her father's decision to give up the rectory; and seems to have never really recovered her serenity of outlook until they were settled in their second home at Chawton. She speaks of beautiful scenery as one of the pleasures we shall enjoy in the next world; and though here as on every subject avoiding any hint of sentimentality, she describes nature, more often than usually supposed, with the eye of a lover who sees and cares for the beauty of its most familiar aspects.

> The rectory stood in a shallow valley, surrounded by sloping meadows, well sprinkled with elm-trees, at the end of a small village of cottages, each well provided with a garden, scattered about prettily on either side of the road . . . which ran at a sufficient distance from the front to allow a carriage drive, through turf and trees. On the south side, the ground rose gently and was occupied by one of those old-fashioned gardens in which vegetables and flowers are combined, flanked and protected on the east by one of the thatched mud walls common in that country, and overshadowed by fine elms. Along the upper or southern side of the garden ran a terrace of the finest turf, which must have been in the writer's thoughts when she

described Catherine Morland's childish delight in "rolling down the green slope at the back of the house."

But the chief beauty of Steventon consisted in its hedgerows. A hedgerow in that country does not mean a thin formal line of quick-set, but an irregular border of copse-wood and timber, often wide enough to contain within it a winding footpath, or a rough cart-track. Under its shelter the earliest primroses, anemones, and wild hyacinths were to be found; sometimes the first bird's-nest; and, now and then, the unwelcome adder. Two such hedgerows radiated, as it were, from the parsonage garden. One, a continuation of the turf terrace, proceeded westward, forming the southern boundary of the home meadows, and was formed into a rustic shrubbery, with occasional seats, called "the Wood Walk"; the other ran straight up the hill, under the name of "the Church Walk," because it led to the parish church, . . . which might have appeared mean and uninteresting to an ordinary observer. But the adept in church architecture would have known that it must have stood there some seven centuries, and would have found beauty in the very narrow early English windows, as well as in the general proportions of its little chancel; while its solitary position, far from the hum of the village, and within sight of no habitation, except a glimpse of the grey manor-house through its circling green of sycamores, has in it something solemn and appropriate to the last resting-place of the silent dead. Sweet violets, both purple and white, grow in abundance beneath its south wall. . . . Large elms protrude their rough branches; old hawthorns shed their annual blossoms over the graves; and the hollow yew-tree must be at least coeval with the church.

The rector's "own exclusive" study, we are told, looked cheerfully into the sunny garden. The dining- or common sitting-room "looked to the front, and was lighted by casement windows." Jane and Cassandra had a sitting-room upstairs, opening into their bedroom.

"I remember," writes their niece, "the common-looking carpet with its chocolate ground, and painted press with shelves above for books, and Jane's piano, and an oval looking-glass that hung between the windows; but the charm of the room with its scanty furniture, and cheaply painted walls must have been, for those old enough to understand it, the flow of native wit, with all the fun and nonsense of a large and clever family."

Warren Hastings was an intimate friend; the Comte de Feuillide went to the guillotine; Henry was nearly caught and detained, with Lovel Edgeworth, in Paris, only escaping across the frontier by means of his wife's perfect French, and her pretended care of him "as a wounded soldier"; Francis and Charles saw service in distant seas at the height of England's stand against the Corsican. We cannot *know* why Jane permitted herself no allusion to public, or national, affairs; risking the charge of indifference to all beyond the radius of the parish pump. Opinions on politics, of course, did not become a lady; but we refuse to believe that the Miss Austens were thoughtless or unfeeling.

Her silence surely was dictated by art; the trained instinct for a purity of style that forbade the introduction of general ideas or serious subjects into the lighter texture of fiction; the rules of harmony in material and tone. No writer was more severe with herself than Jane Austen; and self-discipline perfected her art. Within the strictly defined compass she must have chosen from deliberate conviction of an ideal and of her fitness for the task, she worked with infinite patience and unfailing delight, without a thought of regret for wider fields or wilder storms. Art demands continual hard labour and ceaseless devotion from all who serve; Miss Austen, doubtless, felt the strain, but did not resent the restrictions she had herself imposed.

Whatever the measure of her achievement in comparison with other forms of art, hers was born and nurtured within the rectory home—to something rare and exquisite and unique.

CHAPTER II

NURSERY AND SCHOOLDAYS

When George Austen married Cassandra Leigh in 1764 he was thirty-three and she was twenty-five; eleven years later Jane was born "without a great deal of warning," though "everything was soon happily over." In the interval four sons and a younger Cassandra had made their appearance at the rectory: James 1765, Edward 1767, Henry 1771, Cassandra 1773, Francis 1774, with Charles, "their own particular little brother," to follow in 1779.

By the custom of those days her parents had not married young, and with a nursery full of five children, ranging from ten to the baby of twelve months and a toddling sister of two, Jane must have come into a busy household, with its atmosphere and daily habits fairly well established.

"We have now, *in our old age*," wrote the proud father to his sister, Philadelphia Hancock, "another girl, a pleasant plaything for her sister Cassy, and a future companion. She is to be Jenny, and seems to me as if she would be as like Harry as Cassy is to Neddy. Your sister, thank God, is pure well after it."

Some of the five young people, no doubt, were at the moment learning to walk and talk, as Jane herself would in her turn, at the homely cottage of the worthy couple in Deane, where, like many young people of those days, the little Austens were sent to be out of the way and acquire "out-of-door habits." Still there were "pupils" at the rectory to make up the "fine family with heads and arms and legs enough for the number," and some, no doubt,

were both "noisy and wild." All the more, perhaps, since as Jane's niece reminds us:

"Children, a century ago, were kept in the nursery, out of the way not only of visitors, but of their parents; they were trusted to hired attendants, they were allowed a great deal of air and exercise, were kept on plain food, forced to give way to the comfort of others, accustomed to be overlooked, slightly regarded, considered of trifling importance."

"The boys went hunting, jumping everything that the pony could get its nose over, before their teens"; and the future admiral, at the age of seven, proved himself possessed of more wit than Moses Primrose, by making a guinea profit over his first horse-deal. How many of them, I wonder, had ridden the chestnut "Squirrel"—whom the big boys called "Scug" to plague him, in its two years' residence at Steventon, before Francis saw his chance of turning the pony into cash? And I am much inclined to believe that Jane, like Catherine Morland, "was fond of all boy's plays, and greatly preferred cricket, not merely to dolls, but to the more heroic enjoyments of infancy, nursing a dormouse, feeding a canary-bird, or watering a rose-bush." We know, if the novels were not here to remind us, how much the sisters came to mean to each other at every stage of life; but it is no less certain that she learned, and enjoyed, much from being largely "left to shift for herself" in a numerous family of sport-loving boys.

The novels, indeed, show us two sides of the picture: the strongest witness to happy childhood a daughter's memory could hold dear. For the story of William and Fanny Price is no less Jane Austen's, than the picture of Catherine Morland's "strange unaccountable" early days. If "no one would have supposed Catherine born to be a heroine," who would have guessed that Jane was born a

genius; though I suspect that for her, too, "appearances were mending at fifteen"—when she had certainly scribbled something towards those two "effusions by a very young lady: *The Mystery*, as complete as any of its kind; and *Kitty or the Bower*, of merit beyond any novel already published, or any that will ever in future appear." For she advised her niece to give up "writing till she was *sixteen*," as she often wished she herself "had read more and written less at that age." No doubt from fifteen to seventeen she was in training for a "Great Writer."

The pleasures of "a fine family," such as her own, are gaily set forth in *Northanger Abbey*:

> Catherine's situation in life, the character of her father and mother, her own person and disposition, were all equally against her being a heroine. Her father was a clergyman, without being neglected or poor, and a very respectable man, though his name was Richard. He had a considerable independence, besides two good livings, and he was not in the least addicted to locking up his daughters. Catherine had no taste for a garden; and if she gathered flowers at all, it was chiefly for the pleasure of mischief—at least so it was conjectured from her always preferring those which she was forbidden to take.—Such were her propensities—her abilities were quite as extraordinary. She never could learn or understand any thing before she was taught; and sometimes not even then, for she was often inattentive, and occasionally stupid. Her mother wished her to learn music; and Catherine was sure she should like it, for she was very fond of tinkling the keys of the old forlorn spinnet; so, at eight years old she began. She learnt a year, and could not bear it;—and Mrs. Morland, who did not insist on her daughters being accomplished in spite of incapacity or distaste, allowed her to leave off. The day which dismissed the music-master was one of the happiest of Catherine's life. Her taste for drawing was not superior; though whenever she could obtain the outside of a letter from her mother, or seize upon any other odd piece of paper, she did what she could in that way, by drawing houses and trees, hens and chickens, all very much like one another.—Writing and accounts she was taught by her father; French by her mother: her proficiency in either was not remarkable, and she shirked her lessons in both whenever she could. What a strange, unaccountable character!—for with all these symptoms of profligacy at ten years old, she had neither a bad heart nor a bad temper; was

Steventon Parsonage

seldom stubborn, scarcely ever quarrelsome, and very kind to the little ones, with few interruptions of tyranny; she was moreover noisy and wild, hated confinement and cleanliness, and loved nothing so well in the world as rolling down the green slope at the back of the house.

Mrs. Morland was a very good woman, and wished to see her family everything they ought to be; but it was not very wonderful that Catherine, who had by nature nothing heroic about her, should prefer cricket, base-ball, riding on horse-back, and running about the country at the age of fourteen, to books, or at least books of information—for, provided they were all story and no reflection, she had never any objection to books at all.

The "felicity" of rejoining a long-absent brother is eloquently mirrored in *Mansfield Park*:

This unchecked, equal, fearless intercourse with the brother and friend, who was opening all his heart to her, telling her all his hopes and fears, plans, and solicitudes respecting that long thought of, dearly earned, and justly valued blessing of promotion—who could give her direct and minute information of the father and mother, brothers and sisters, of whom she very seldom heard—who was interested in all the comforts and all the little hardships of her home, at Mansfield—ready to think of every member of that home as she directed, or differing only by a less scrupulous opinion, and more noisy abuse of their aunt Norris—and with whom (perhaps the dearest indulgence of the whole) all the evil and good of their earliest years could be gone over again, and every former united pain and pleasure retraced with the fondest recollection. An advantage this, a strengthener of love, in which even the conjugal tie is beneath the fraternal. Children of the same family, the same blood, with the same first associations and habits, have some means of enjoyment in their power, which no subsequent connections can supply; and it must be by a long and unnatural estrangement, by a divorce which no subsequent connection can justify, if such precious remains of the earliest attachments are ever entirely outlived. Too often, alas! it is so.—Fraternal love, sometimes almost every thing, is at others worse than nothing. But with William and Fanny Price, it was still a sentiment in all its prime and freshness, wounded by no opposition of interest, cooled by no separate attachment, and feeling the influence of time and absence only in its increase.

An affection so amiable was advancing each in the opinion of all who had hearts to value any thing good. Henry Crawford was as much struck with it as any. He honoured the warm-hearted, blunt fondness of the young sailor, and saw, with lively admiration, the glow

of Fanny's cheek, the brightness of her eye, the deep interest, the absorbed attention, while her brother was describing any of the imminent hazards, or terrific scenes, which such a period, at sea, must supply.

It was a picture which Henry Crawford had moral taste enough to value. Fanny's attractions increased—increased two-fold—for the sensibility which beautified her complexion and illumined her countenance, was an attraction in itself.

We do not, indeed, positively know that Jane personally *was* fond of "rolling down the slope of the back garden"; but she was certainly not in any way queer or lonely as a child and the young Austens were bold and high-spirited by nature. Mrs. Austen's historic saying that "if Cassandra were going to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing her fate" suggests a fiery and impulsive devotion, that would express itself in action and quick speech. Fanny Price, we may be certain, is not "a portrait of the artist." It was a family saying that "Cassandra had the *merit* of having her temper always under command, but that Jane had the *happiness* of a temper which never required to be commanded"; which points to the possession of a sparkling and merry tongue.

The girls, indeed, were sent for a time to a boarding school; not surely from any difficulty in their father teaching them at home; but, one would rather think, to modify the exclusively masculine influences of their play-hours, and impart a little of the feminine grace they certainly possessed in later years. Jane indeed was under seven at the time, and finished her schooling at the age of nine, so that we are not surprised to hear that she was not expected "to profit much by the instruction" received. She went "because she would have been miserable without Cassandra," herself only two years older; and it is not probable that the experience had much effect on either sister.

Their schooldays began at Oxford with a widowed sister

of Uncle Edward,[1] whose manners were somewhat stern and stiff; but they were soon moved to Southampton, where the family were "attacked by a putrid fever," from which Jane herself was "very ill and nearly died." The experience, no doubt, accounts for her curt allusion, in *Love and Freindship*, to "the unmeaning luxuries of Bath and the stinking fish of Southampton"; though she was destined, in later life, to visit the place in a happier mood, to appreciate the "elegant" assembly rooms; and, maybe, to echo the enthusiasms of Mary Russell Mitford, who declared that "in the total absence of the vulgar hurry of business or the chilling apathy of fashion, it was, indeed, all life, all gaiety, and had an airiness, an animation, which might become the capital of fairyland."

So far, at any rate, schooling had still been something of a family affair; but the second attempt was more serious. The Abbey School in the Forbury at Reading was a famous one in its day; with that atmosphere of somewhat easy, but graceful and real, culture, which some Victorians have been surprised to hear their mothers talk of, before women's "higher education" had even become a pious hope. Mrs. Sherwood, Miss Mitford, and Fanny Kemble were at Abbey School; which was at one time carried on in Hans Place, and still later in Paris. The ancient abbey, adjoining the school house, was "exceedingly interesting" with its "noble gateway" and "vast staircase;" there Jane, possibly, first "formed those favourable ideas" of abbeys which gave Catherine Morland so much delight and distress.

Mrs. Sherwood tells us "there was, also, a beautiful old-fashioned garden, where the young ladies were allowed to wander under tall trees in hot summer evenings. The liberty which the first class had was so great that if we

[1] Dr. Cooper, Rector of Whaddon and Sonning, who married Mrs. Austen's sister Jane.

attended our tutor in his study for an hour or two every morning, no human being ever took the trouble to inquire where else we spent the rest of the day between our meals. Thus, whether we gossiped in one turret or another, whether we lounged about in the garden, or out of the window above the gateway, no one so much as said, 'Where have you been, Mademoiselle?'"

Even little girls like Jane and Cassandra were, apparently, allowed to take some of their schoolfellows to tea with Edward Austen and Cousin Edward (Cooper) at an inn!

The proprietor of the school, Mrs. Latournelle, was a stout old woman, with a cork leg: "only fit for giving out clothes for the wash and mending them, making tea, ordering dinner, and, in fact, doing the work of a housekeeper." She was, no doubt, responsible for the frequent comparisons between the Abbey School and that "honest, old-fashioned" establishment at Highbury which produced Harriet Smith. But like many other homely bodies, she was probably shrewd enough to engage good teachers; Miss Mitford records several excellent theatrical performances in her time, and it was certainly not a "common" school, like Mrs. Goddard's, where mistresses scrambled with their pupils to peep over the blind at Philip Elton.

We must admit that Emma Woodhouse would have been "sorry to see much pride or refinement in the teacher of a school"; and Jane Austen again and again expresses her more kindly pity for any one obliged to take up such work. But her pity for Miss Taylor in no way diminished her respect and, so far as schooling can influence a young child, there is no real reason to suppose her unlucky in this respect.

Far more, of course, was done for her at home, as I have already pointed out. She was educated, in the true sense, by her father; and her mother and her brothers, if not Cassandra herself, were all fully competent assistants.

There was Cousin Eliza [1] to improve her French accent: and she could probably "manage" Italian as well as Anne Elliot. Her views and knowledge of history and her pretended hatred of Queen Elizabeth are revealed from two opposed, but equally humorous, aspects, in Catherine's famous conversation with Henry Tilney, and in the "partial, prejudiced, and ignorant *History of England*, with very few dates," of *Love and Freindship*. Her music and singing have been pronounced good.

There were, of course, later and longer breaks in the family circle when James and Henry went to Oxford; when Frank and Charles entered the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth, while still in their teens; while Edward was adopted by the Knights,[2] and sent on the Grand Tour, extended to Dresden and Rome: but the strongest affection, and as close intimacy as possible, was maintained between them all through life.

The serenity, so conspicuous in Jane Austen and her work, came, no doubt, from the rector himself. George Austen was governed, primarily, by his affections and his faith, graced by learning, a refined taste, and a natural dignity of manner, neither formal nor stiff, bringing him love within, and respectful affection without, the family circle, which few men have done more to deserve. Despite his close attachment to colleges and the Church, and a prolonged exercise of pedagogic activities, he was as fond of charades as Mr. Woodhouse, always loving nonsense and fun: a gift mercifully passed on to every one of his children: *most* mercifully for the peace and comfort of Jane. Extremely handsome in youth, with beautiful hair with short curls about the ears, prematurely milk-white, and with eyes "not large,

[1] Daughter of George Austen's sister Philadelphia and Tysoe Saul Hancock (friend of Warren Hastings) who married a French Comte.

[2] Thomas Knight, of Godmersham Park in Kent, and Chawton House in Hampshire, who had married George Austen's second cousin.

but of a peculiar and bright hazel," that stood by him all his life.

Mrs. Austen, with outspoken frankness peculiarly her own, would say "she had never been a beauty," but her "aristocratic nose" was transmitted to a good many younger Austens; she had "well-cut features, large grey eyes, and good eyebrows, but *not* a bright complexion." She was, moreover, a woman of sense and wit, more quick and decided than her husband, shrewd in judging character, and for many years a capable and energetic housewife, despite very indifferent health. There was "sparkle and spirit," we are told, "in her talk"; and her letters, unfortunately not extant, were "excellent, either in prose or verse, making no pretence to poetry, but being simply playful common sense in rhyme." We can detect both her parents in Jane.

James, her eldest brother, was not only destined to be his father's curate and successor, but had evidently a good deal of the rector's mind and temperament in his composition. His scholarly and literary tastes were encouraged by more than undergraduate days at Oxford, and enlarged by visiting the Continent in youth. There can be little doubt that what Jane owed to his brotherly kindness in training and directing her girlhood mind was recalled and repaid a hundredfold in the pleasing pictures of Edmund Bertram's grave care for Fanny Price and Henry Tilney's merry lessons in taste and information which revolutionized Catherine's opinions on history and the picturesque. James was so far abreast with the times as to prefer the simplicity of Cowper to Pope's artifice, and the selections printed below from *The Loiterer* may serve to measure his accomplishments in familiar prose. Edmund Bertram, again, clearly presents the straightforward, honourable attitude of James Austen as a "parish priest," whose duties he, too, had learned from

a father's precepts, and *unlike* Edmund, from a father's practice.

> A parish (declared Sir Thomas) has wants and claims which can be known only by a clergyman constantly resident, and which no proxy can be capable of satisfying to the same extent. Edmund might, in the common phrase, do the duty of Thornton—that is, he might read prayers and preach—without giving up Mansfield Park; he might ride over every Sunday to a house nominally inhabited and go through Divine Service; he might be a clergyman of Thornton Lacey every seventh day, for three or four hours, if that would content him. But it would not. He knows that human nature needs more lessons than a weekly sermon can convey; and that if he does not live among his parishioners, and prove himself, by constant attention, their well-wisher and friend, he does very little either for their good or his own.

We are told that, when Benjamin Lefroy, James's son-in-law, presented himself for ordination, the bishop asked him two questions only: "Was he the son of Mr. Lefroy of Ashe; had he married a Miss Austen?" Such testimonials, however honoured and honourable in themselves, would not have satisfied George or James Austen. It was not from them Jane drew Mr. Collins or Mr. Elton.

If the Austens had many delightful qualities in common, their individualities were none the less strongly marked; and contrasts are to be observed at once and from the earliest days. Mrs. Austen's standards were no doubt exacting, and she declared that Edward "made no pretensions" to scholarship or taste. He was, in fact, a country gentleman of the best type. Combining the warm-hearted, but rather more discreet, hospitality of Sir John Middleton with Henry Crawford's adroit experience in planting and screening, or making additions to a house, he was indeed "a blessing to all the juvenile part of the neighbourhood," to his own mother, sisters, and brothers, his eleven children, and all his nephews and nieces.

When first the Knights invited Edward "during the

holidays," the father seems to have felt some not unnatural alarm lest the most unpromising of his pupils should altogether forget his Latin grammar. But Mrs. Austen knew there was more in life than mere learning, and, with her usual clear-sighted prudence, replied: "I think, my dear, you had better oblige your cousins and let the child go." Edward, no doubt, was best fitted of them all to the part in store for him; but it is interesting to note that the benevolence of Thomas Knight, from whom the rector also received his first and later preferments, was dictated rather by general affection and respect for the Austens than by fond indulgence towards an attractive lad. The estates were left "in remainder to Edward's brothers in succession," in case he left no direct heirs. Whatever the fate of Edward, Godmersham and Chawton would have come into the family.

This proved, however, to be the one adventure or fairy tale of the Austens. Edward, subsequently taking the name of Knight, was transplanted, like Frank Churchill, but not by the "little minds of rich people in authority," to a position of wealth and dignity, such as the children of modest affluence can as a rule only enjoy in day-dreams. Yet he became, in consequence, rather more than less thoughtful of his brothers and sisters: remaining always a lively and amusing comrade, an excellent man of business, constantly contriving occasion for the enjoyment and comfort of the rest. Jane once jokingly wrote of herself at Godmersham as "all alone; with five tables, eight-and-twenty chairs, and two fires all to myself"; but her genial pictures of intimacy between "Great House" and "Cottage," as anticipated in *Sense and Sensibility*, were surely derived from loving gratitude to Edward in *Persuasion*, without the foolish jealousies of a Mary Musgrove to disturb the peace.

Henry, next in age, and Jane's favourite brother, must,

I think, be admitted the least stable or self-composed of the Austens. Yet to this day his collateral descendants have declared him to be "an extraordinarily dear person," as I have it in a private letter, and his warm-hearted introduction of Jane Austen to her readers bears ample evidence to the truth. He was the only Austen who took up more than one occupation in the course of his life. He was in the Oxford Militia, as lieutenant, adjutant, and captain, probably from 1793 until the peace of 1802, when he turned banker and army agent, in partnership with another young retired officer, named Maunde.

By the courtesy of Mr. Ellis, Secretary to the Albany, I have been able to determine that Messrs. Henry Thomas Austen and Henry Maunde took a ninety-seven years' lease, from March 25, 1804, of the "set of chambers" at the south-west corner of Albany Court Yard, next Piccadilly, then No. 1, at the rent of £10 a year. This is the two-story building (immediately south of and parallel with the left-hand portion of the present No. 2, now occupied by Messrs. Lovibond) which has no separate entrance to-day, and is a part of the premises (including the former St. George's Club) of Messrs. Meakers, 47 Piccadilly.

Henry was, therefore, among the first tenants of Alexander Copland, the enterprising builder of St. Martin's Lane, who bought Albany (originally Piccadilly) House from the spend-thrift Duke of York and Albany for £37,000, and converted it into apartments. The "Court Yard" had been the stables; and Copland himself built the present picturesque chambers over the garden behind.

These were until quite recently let only to bachelors, but no such restrictions were ever applied to the Court Yard and, could we discover that Jane ever visited her brother during those years, one more literary association would be established with this historic quarter.

The Town Clerk of Westminster kindly tells me that Messrs. Austen, Maunde and Tilson were first rated for 10 Henrietta Street in 1807,[1] when Henry and his wife were living in Brompton, though we have no earlier reference to this address in the *Letters* than April 1811, when Jane called there to arrange about some tickets for the theatre. After his wife's death in 1813 Henry moved (from Sloane Street) to chambers over the bank, and there Jane frequently stayed with him, until the bankruptcy of March 1816; due to no personal extravagance of the partners.

There is no house or business at present numbered 10 in Henrietta Street; but "it would appear that what was then No. 10 is now a building next door to Messrs. Chapman and Hall, occupied by Mr. Joseph de Costa, Covent Garden fruiterer, which stands three doors west of St. Paul's Rectory, the latter being numbered 7."

Meanwhile Austen and Maunde went on paying rates, and presumably rent, for the chambers in Albany, until February 21, 1812, when their "original lease was forfeited." I can only suppose that Henry Maunde moved in, or continued to live there, when they transferred the office to Henrietta Street.

Ultimately Henry became "an earnest preacher of the evangelical school," and took orders which, as his great-nephew, Mr. Hubback, tells me, had been his original intention. His cousin Eliza, widow of the Comte de Feuillide, had refused James (as Mary Crawford could not face marrying the *reverend* Edmund) *because* he was in the Church, and Henry probably abandoned the idea for her sake. She told her godfather, Warren Hastings, that she had kept him waiting for two years, and it was the captain of militia who "at length induced her to acquiescence."

There is no other example of Jane Austen using the

[1] In *Life and Letters* the move is given as "in or before June 1808."

character and circumstances of her own people in such full detail, for there was a great deal of Mary Crawford in Eliza, and Edmund originated in James. Only a very complete understanding and deep affection could have let Jane permit herself to indulge in any kind of real resemblance. The Comtesse was, in fact, her "particular" friend, whose gaiety and light-heartedness she entered into with unalloyed delight.[1] We find Henry again and again busy about his sister's affairs, writing letters, arranging interviews with publishers and printers, "driving her up to town in his curricle." It was through him, of course, or in his company, she ever entered that "scene of dissipation and vice" we call London, paying as many as three visits to Henrietta Street in one year, and somewhat gravely injuring her own health by two months' nursing when "his life was in imminent danger" from "inflammatory fever" in 1815.

He was the handsomest of a good-looking family, and his father considered him the most talented. But with him, clearly, it was rather brilliance than scholarship or application, that won applause; and though Jane declares that he could not help being amusing, his effects in serious conversation were spoiled by an excited and bombastic grandiloquence, for which, however, he had, when recovering from the outburst, the grace to lead the laugh unmercifully against himself.

Francis, the most distinguished of the Austens in his lifetime, had also somewhat sterner qualities than the rest. Early accustomed, as they are in the Navy, to authority,

[1] There has been, however, an interpretation of this matter put forward, which *may* certainly be correct. For after all, Jane Austen was human, and few of us can be entirely satisfied with her severity towards the Crawfords. It is suggested then that, in her devotion to Henry, Jane had secretly felt that her brilliant cousin had been a little spoiled by the men. In this spirit she devised Crawford's suicidal folly as a way of securing Mary's discomfiture: indulging emotions, not *personally* jealous, but of a sister's loyalty, which in the family she had severely suppressed.

after strict subjection to discipline, he soon developed the somewhat autocratic bearing of the old-world high Tory, often seen in the Service, restrained in manner by courtesy and consideration for others' feelings, but fundamentally more dogmatic than the moderate Toryism prevalent at the rectory. From the interesting volume on *Jane Austen's Sailor Brothers* by his grandson and great-granddaughter, John and Edith Hubback, we are able to follow the admiral through every step of his active and honourable career, to learn much about the Navy from his log-books and journals, to admire his industry, his devotion to duty, and his care for those entrusted to his command.

His father, evidently a good judge of character, had high hopes for Francis; and few sons have more conspicuously justified expectation. Mr. Hubback has printed a most striking and impressive letter from George Austen to his fourteen-year-old son, on the eve of the latter's first voyage, written as to an officer and a man, on "such general subjects as he conceived of the greatest importance." He exhorts the boy to "affability, good humour, and compliance," conciliatory and respectful behaviour, an inclination to oblige, and the carefully avoiding every appearance of selfishness; with a sort of kindness to his inferiors, which will not be thrown away. He trusts that Francis will be prudent and careful in the management of his money, make good friends, and soon distinguish himself by "a superior proficiency in nautical acquirements."

In conclusion he begs "you would never forget that you have not upon earth a more disinterested and warm friend than your truly affectionate father." He could have said the same to all his children, and none of them were ever tempted to forget.

Charles was very much the "Benjamin" of the rectory; almost equally the world's pet. At seventy-three his death

of cholera on the Irrawaddy River is said to have been "a great grief to the whole fleet," for he had "won the hearts of all by his gentleness and kindness while he was struggling with disease." His story, too, is told in detail by Mr. Hubback; being more adventurous in its opening, almost equally distinguished at the close. As Francis lived to be ninety-one, and Charles to seventy-three, both had ample opportunity for useful service.

Jane wrote their epitaph in praise of their profession; which is, "if possible, more distinguished for its domestic virtues than in its national importance."

CHAPTER III

FAITH, MORALS, AND SOCIETY

THERE is something, I think, rather elusive about Cassandra. We feel her presence always, very near to Jane, a little motherly perhaps, or so regarded by the sister, who was in actual age no more than two years her junior. When her own powers were fully matured and, we may almost say, her genius acknowledged, Jane "would still speak of Cassandra as of one wiser and better than herself." Her disposition was, very probably, somewhat quiet and calm, she did not easily or eagerly express her feelings; and it is not unlikely that her mother's abrupt, though usually sound, judgments and rapid decisions, a little over-developed, Miss Austen's self-restraint. Yet Jane pronounced her the "finest comic writer of the age"; and the girl who drew those fascinating royal portraits for Jane's "partial" *History of England* can never have been afraid of fun or incapable of nonsense.

There is no possible excuse for imagining that she was at all shy or afraid of her more talkative sister and brothers, at all reserved within the family, or lacking a strong personality of her own. I have always imagined, though possibly without reason, that her health was not particularly good. The death of her quite admirable fiancé, of course, threw a heavy shadow over her later years, though she lived to be over seventy, "a pale, dark-eyed old lady, with a high arched nose and a kind smile, dressed in a long cloak and a large drawn bonnet, both made of black satin."

Superficially, indeed, we know almost less of Cassandra,

and of Jane herself, than of her brothers. Their lives were rather exceptionally uneventful so far as change of scene and domestic relations are concerned: their brothers' marriages only widening, without ever disturbing, the family circle. Nearly all Jane's letters, of which the earliest extant was written when she was twenty, belong to those short intervals when the sisters were separated during a visit. Cassandra's natural reserve and dread of publicity led her to destroy those of intimate or emotional significance; and in later years, when publication was actually being considered, one of her nieces destroyed those addressed to herself. Some, however, had been preserved by other members of the family, whence it comes that the additional letters in Mr. Hubback's *Sailor Brothers* and the *Life and Letters* by W. and R. A. Austen-Leigh had been kept because specially valued by their possessors, whereas those inherited by Lord Brabourne had been, for the most part, left intact on account of their triviality or lack of emotion.

We might have known more of Jane's thoughts and feelings: of events in her life there was, probably, little more to know. Jane Austen could draw the picture for us; making it real, alive, and interesting in every detail, creating persons and scenes. That was genius: the form of art she deliberately studied, formulated, and carried to perfection.

We cannot expect to do for her what she accomplished for Catherine Morland or Anne Elliot; to build a story from casual gossip or allusion in a sister's "occasional correspondence" about persons and places as intimately familiar to the recipient as to the writer, for whom a mere name carried with it a thousand memories or associations; where each chance phrase had more meaning than there was need, or perhaps possibility, to express in words. In reality only the novels can bring the Austens to life. Yet they, too, are dangerous guides; for Jane Austen's method was dramatic:

writing always from the mind of her heroine, looking on men and life through Elizabeth's or Emma's eyes.

In some respects, moreover, life at Steventon was more varied than at Hartfield or Longbourn: from earliest days there was a great deal of coming and going within the family. Jane herself had been to Oxford, Southampton, Reading, Sevenoaks, and London, when only thirteen. She was a child of five when James matriculated at St. John's, and eleven years old when Francis entered the naval academy. Henry had followed his brother to Oxford, James and Edward were married, Cousin Eliza's husband had gone to the guillotine, and Francis had come home from his first voyage "a young and a successful officer," while she was still in her teens. She was only twenty when Cassandra became engaged to Thomas Fowle, brother-in-law of their great friend Eliza Lloyd, who had been a pupil at the rectory six years earlier, and died in the West Indies two years later. George Austen's pupils, of course, were often changing; and as the house was emptied during their holidays, private theatricals took place at midsummer and Christmas; the first in her tenth year and the last in her fifteenth.

In later years she wrote, as usual, to Cassandra of a "little visitor" to their home in Southampton. "She is a nice, natural, open-hearted, affectionate girl, with all the ready civility which one sees in the best children in the present day; so unlike anything that I was myself at her age, that I am often all astonishment and shame." Though characteristically made the occasion for modest self-reproach, we may feel sure that then, as now, children had grown to greater freedom and self-reliance than their parents had been permitted: a change which Jane Austen, naturally, welcomed as an improvement not portending danger of licence or disrespect.

Pickering, pinxt. *Greatbatch, sculpt.*

FRONTISPIECE TO "NORTHANGER ABBEY," 1833

"How came I up that staircase!" he replied, greatly surprised. "Because it is the nearest way from the stable-yard to my own chamber."

We are told, indeed, that she was one of the least exclusive of the family, and her knowledge of persons like Lucy Steele and the Thorpes does not suggest the condescending observation of stiffness or social pride. Mrs. Mitford's imagined recollections of "the prettiest, silliest, most affected, husband-hunting butterfly," date from acquaintance *concluded* when Jane was barely ten years old; and we may dismiss with equal confidence her daughter's later report, still from a prejudiced second-hand, of "the most perpendicular, precise, taciturn piece of single blessedness that ever existed—a poker of whom every one is afraid."

When Philadelphia Walter in 1788 "began an acquaintance with her female cousins,[1] Austens," she thought Cassandra "very pretty," but Jane "very like her brother Henry, not at all pretty, and very prim, unlike a girl of twelve; . . . whimsical and affected"; but handsomely concludes, "it is a hasty judgment which you will scold me for."

Scarcely three years later Philadelphia's great friend, and their own favourite cousin, Eliza de Feuillide, refers to the Miss Austens as "perfect beauties, gaining hearts by dozens, two of the prettiest girls in England"; and again, more seriously: "They are, I think, equally sensible and both so to a degree seldom met with; but still my heart gives the preference to Jane, whose kind partiality to me indeed requires a return of the same nature."

In Jane Austen's girlhood, young ladies—there were no "women" then—however domesticated, were seldom called upon for any serious work in the house, at least beyond dusting a drawing-room or arranging the flowers. In season, possibly, they assisted their mother in the mysteries of jam-making and preserves. There were maids within doors, carriages and a man without. Time was given, more probably than the younger members might always

[1] She was in fact a granddaughter of George Austen's mother's first husband.

wish, to needlework—plain or fancy, to reading "suitable" books, and to the pursuit of accomplishments such as became elegant females, whether or no they had any special taste for the arts, any desire to excel therein. Catherine Morland, we know, "brought herself to read sonnets, though she could not write them; and could listen to other people's performance on the pianoforte with very little fatigue, though she had no notion of drawing."

In such matters, however, as in others, Mrs. Austen must certainly have cared little for the conventions. She preferred her daughters to follow their own inclinations, within reason: provided, that is, no interference with household order were entailed: and her own way of dressing was always more sensible than becoming, bordering at times on the eccentric; though Jane and Cassandra appear to have been normally interested in the fashions. What were taught, and insisted upon, at the rectory were good manners and consideration of others, respect for learning or culture and, rather by practice than precept, a sincere, orthodox faith. To us, indeed, it all seems a little narrow-minded and petty, decidedly unenterprising and dull. We forget that conventions, when accepted without demur, do not prevent any one thinking for himself, and actually allow for greater divergence of individuality than any pet particular theory or principle of one's own contriving. Man's conscience is more tyrannical and interfering than Church or State. Orthodoxy and conventions, again, may be quite sincerely upheld and followed.

Country gentlemen at their best, as Jane Austen knew them, were neither idle, stupid, nor hypocritical. They had inherited from a prosaic century, that had thrown off the ornaments and affectations of an earlier age, a great respect for practical common sense; but, with greater simplicity, they were no longer sceptics or entirely material.

Gentler manners had brought with them gentler thoughts and language; while a sincere faith and morality, however formal their commandments, governed the conduct of the better sort, though seldom discussed, questioned, or even mentioned—because, generally speaking, agreed upon and accepted as a matter of course.

There are those who would have us believe that Jane Austen cared for none of these things; because she never involves her characters in spiritual conflict, adopts a conventional attitude on most directly moral questions, and scarcely distinguishes her clergymen from her laymen. In fact, however, there is unmistakable evidence of personal faith, high principles, and deep reverence for the spiritual meanings of life, revealed towards the Crawfords, William Elliot, in minor matters Frank Churchill, and very seriously —towards Wickham and Willoughby. She knew the clergy too well to draw them as a race apart, a mistake not then committed by the English Church; but, with the possible exception of Henry Tilney, they are to be found among the more serious persons of the tale: Mary Crawford, we know, "never had danced with a clergyman. She says she never will." That Wickham was utterly unfit for such a calling is asserted with emphasis, and assumed as obvious. To her mind, however, all men should conscientiously devote themselves to their own affairs, and those which belonged peculiarly to "the Cloth" were not such as often, or greatly, concerned a writer of tales.

There is a passage in one of her letters, and such testimony obviously counts for more than anything in the novels, which puts the matter beyond question or doubt.

Young people confided in Jane Austen, and one of her nieces, we learn, had been—not unnaturally—somewhat annoyed by the severe strictures of a most "suitable" young man she had been meaning to marry. He told her

revealed as socially superior to his hosts. "The landed property of Hartfield certainly was inconsiderable, being but a sort of notch in the Donwell Abbey estate, to which all the rest of Highbury belonged; but their fortune, from other sources, was such as to make them scarcely secondary to Donwell Abbey itself in every other kind of consequence." That, nevertheless, they *were* just "secondary" is assumed as a matter of course.

In Highbury we meet first the Westons, intimate again almost on equal terms; but "poor Miss Taylor's" agreeable husband was "engaged in trade," and "born of a respectable family, which for the last two or three generations had been rising into gentility and property"; while "*she* had been Emma's governess, if less a governess than a friend," and "an excellent woman" to boot.

> At Hartfield you have very good specimens of well-educated, well-bred men. There is an openness, a quickness, almost a bluntness in Mr. Weston, which everybody likes in *him* because there 's so much good humour with it. Mr. Knightley's downright, decided, commanding sort of manner suits *him* very well; his figure and look, and situation in life seem to allow it. You might not see one in a hundred, with *gentleman* so plainly written as in Mr. Knightley.

Frank Churchill, indeed, though born a Weston, had been adopted into "a great Yorkshire family," and was "a very fine young man," who might aspire to a Miss Woodhouse; and Jane Fairfax, despite her "impossible relations" and her dependent position, was unmistakably the lady. But if her brains equalled Emma's and her application had been superior, friendship between them would always be rooted in condescension.

"After these came a second set; among the most come-at-able of whom were Mrs. and Miss Bates, and Mrs. Goddard"; the gentlemanlike Perry, apothecary; the worthy Coles, "very good sort of people, but of low origin, in trade, and

only moderately genteel"; that "pert young lawyer," William Coxe; "the less worthy females, invited to come in the evening," after "dinner company"; and "the yeomanry," last of all, "precisely the order of people with whom I feel I can have nothing to do." Though, "as a composition," Robert Martin's famous letter "would not have disgraced a gentleman, he was remarkably plain. But that is nothing compared with his entire want of gentility, so very clownish, so totally without air."

Yet Jane Austen was not a snob. It has been remarked, indeed, that in almost every case, titled persons only appear in the novels, to be exposed for their stupidity and ill-breeding. Lady Catherine de Burgh, Sir Walter Elliot and, in another way, Sir John Middleton, are absolutely unrefined. General Tilney easily forgot to be a gentleman; Sir Thomas Bertram thought Mrs. Norris a lady. For Emma, as it had been for Catherine, "there was not one lord in the neighbourhood; no—not even a baronet. The Woodhouses were first in consequence there."

Yet the mixture of classes is, apparently, not only frequent but tacitly approved. "Mr. Darcy is a gentleman": said Miss Bennet, "I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal." Though Lady Catherine declares that "the shades of Pemberley would be polluted" by their alliance, that Darcy "would be ruined in the opinion of all his friends and made the contempt of the world," Miss Eliza knew very well that if his family "*were* excited" by such a marriage, "the world in general would have too much sense to join in the scorn." The Austen-heroines, as a rule, "move up" by marriage, and find themselves quite at home in more "exalted" ranks.

On the other hand, Emma was quite annoyed, if not offended, at receiving no invitation from the Coles. At first "she felt she should like to have had the power of

refusal": but in the event it proved a delightful party, where "she led off the dance with genuine spirit and enjoyment." That perfect gentleman, her father, had been only anxious to avoid giving any offence to her worthy hosts. "My dear Emma, we must consider this. I am sure, rather than run the risk of hurting Mr. and Mrs. Cole, you would stay a little longer than you might wish. You will not regard being tired." Even the elder Miss Bennets, too, enjoyed "a nice comfortable noisy game of lottery tickets, and a little bit of hot supper afterwards."

The Austens were, quite definitely, upper middle-class, who met and married the county, and at the same time lost nothing of social prestige by familiar intercourse with lower grades of their own class.

Among "Great Houses" familiar to the Austens—recalling Rosings, Barton Park, Upper Cross, Pemberley, Kellynch Hall, Mansfield Park, and the Abbeys of Donwell and Northanger—were: "The Vyne," and its Tory Squire Chute, a modern Sir Roger de Coverley, with his scarlet coat flapping open, his pigtail, shirt frill, knee-breeches, and boot-tops; a kindly and humorous soul, "tilting his heavy folio prayer-book on the edge of his high pew," [1] and watching his tenants in the parish church; also the Huguenot Portals of "Laverstoke House," and "Freefolk Priors"; Lord Dorchester, sometime Governor-General of Quebec, at Kempshott House, where Jane danced in 1799; Lord Portsmouth of Hurstbourne, who, "at five and six years old, was a pupil at the rectory, very backward of his age, but good-tempered and orderly"; and, at thirty-two, "surpassed the rest in his attentive recollection of Cassandra during a ball"; and Lady Bolton, of Hackwood, who "was much improved by a wig." At Oakley Hall Jane "ate some sandwiches all over mustard,

[1] *The Vine Hunt.* Privately printed. By J. E. Austen-Leigh.

admired Mr. Bramston's porter, and Mrs. Bramston's transparencies."

But the Big-Withers of Manydown Park meant far more to the Austen sisters. Of the ladies (known as the Misses Bigg) one married a fine specimen of the country gentleman, Sir William Heathcote of Hursley Park, "M.P. for Oxford and *sole* patron of John Keble": a second married Southey's uncle; and Alethea, who never married, was for years the Miss Austens' particular friend; their sensible pleasant brother actually proposed to Jane.

It was, finally, the old "Manor House of Deane," home of the Harwoods, where in 1796 Jane "escaped John Lyford," to "expose herself" by everything most profligate and shocking in the way of dancing and sitting down with her "good-looking Irish friend," Tom Lefroy, whose brother always insisted on wearing the "same coloured clothes" as Tom Jones. Quite affable ladies and gentlemen, we fancy these grand folk to have been; who, at any rate, condescended to grace the more popular Assembly Balls, where Mr. Calland, "altogether rather the genius and flirt of the evening," was teased and abused by Jane for not dancing, as "there were thirty-one people, and only eleven ladies out of the number."

There was, of course, pleasant and "good" society at Edward's own estates of Godmersham Park and Chawton House; and also at Stoneleigh Abbey, belonging to one of the Leighs, where Mrs. Austen ate "fish, venison, and all manner of good things, in a noble parlour," spent part of every day in the amazing four-and-a-half-acre kitchen-garden, the "strong-beer cellar," with "casks beyond imagination," and the "alarming state bedroom, with its high, dark crimson velvet bed, just fit for a heroine." [1]

[1] These particulars are given in a most amusing letter from Mrs. Austen, printed by Miss Hill, to James's wife, Mary.

Jane, meanwhile, having "many a good laugh at poor Lady Saye and Sele," who had once told Fanny Burney how "delighted she was with *Evelina*, and my sister's *Mausoleum of Julia* is also a most elegant thing, I assure you. Lord Hawke himself says it's all poetry."

A little below the county we shall frequently meet Tom Lefroy, later Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, his uncle, the Reverend Isaac Peter, and "Madame Lefroy," sister to Sir Egerton Brydges, of the rectory at Ashe, with Benjamin, their son, who married Jane's niece, "a very proper compliment to an aunt!" The Lloyds, indeed, were even more closely intimate, whether living at Deane or, eighteen miles from Steventon, at Ibthorpe. Mrs. Lloyd, the widowed daughter of a fashionable but thriftless Mrs. Craven, was very dear to Jane. Of the Miss Lloyds, one married a brother of Thomas Fowle, afterwards engaged to Cassandra, and two became, in due course, excellent second wives to James and Francis Austen. Frequently Jane would pass the rectory to dine at Ashe Park, where, on one occasion, she "said two or three amusing things, and her host, Mr. Holder, made a few infamous puns"; and on another they "played at *vingt-un*, and were very cross."

In the outer circle were the Digweeds, for a hundred years tenants of Steventon Manor; of whom Mr. Digweed went "fifty-fifty" with George Austen "in buying twenty or thirty sheep." John, his son, supposed that two elms once "fell from their grief" at Cassandra's absence, and Jane "wound up four days of dissipation by meeting William Digweed at Deane."

There was Stephen Terry, again, at Dumner Manor, with whom Jane danced five dances at the Angel out of ten, while another ball was "made up of Jervoises and Terrys"; Dr. Lyford of Basingstoke, who gave the reversion of his flaxen wig to an old man of Steventon, "producing thereby a

ludicrous resemblance between the peasant and the doctor," whose son John appears among Jane's "odd set of partners" at the "Rooms."

"There were more dancers than the room could hold," writes Jane, "which is enough to constitute a good ball at any time"; and if the phrase should mean the precise opposite of what is said, it is none the less eminently characteristic of that determination to enjoy whatever the gods may provide. It is true that Miss Emma Woodhouse once declared "it would be dreadful to be standing so close. Nothing can be farther from pleasure than dancing in a crowd—and a crowd in a small room." To which the ever gallant Churchill replied, "I agree with you exactly. A crowd in a little room—Miss Woodhouse, you have the art of giving pictures in a few words. Exquisite, quite exquisite"; which is, of course, precisely the art of Jane.

One suspects Miss Austen of dancing well; but whatever her real, considered, opinion may have been about the merits or drawbacks of a crowd, we are convinced that her delight did not depend, exclusively, upon her partner's step. She could enjoy some quite informal, impromptu dances, with even a little romping noise.

> It may be possible to do without dancing entirely. Instances have been known of young people passing many, many months successively without being at any ball of any description, and no material injury accrue either to body or mind; but when a beginning is made—when the felicities of rapid motion have once been, though slightly, felt—it must be a heavy set that does not ask for more.

And Jane did not suffer gladly "a heavy set."

When her family assure us, in the *Life and Letters*, that "flirtation was neither a serious nor a frequent occupation" with Jane, they are, justly, repudiating the violent label of "husband-hunting butterfly," affixed to her by Mrs. Mitford's imperfect memory. But save Darcy and Knightley,

every one of the heroes or villains, dearly loved by their creator, was an accomplished adept in the fine art of a "nice" flirtation. For its vulgar practitioners, Lydia Bennet, Isabella Thorpe, and Miss Steele who, we are told, "did *not* succeed in catching the doctor," her amused contempt has a sting that knows no mercy. But who can play so daintily upon the flutterings of the female heart as Henry Tilney? what mastery has Frank Churchill over the hidden meaning of a deft phrase, meant for one ear alone! How skilfully do Crawford and Wentworth carry on with two young gentlewomen at once: the former passing on, with consummate ability, to "make a small hole in" yet another maiden's heart. Wickham, again, has the expert touch, at once casual and discreet, winning hearts by inviting confidence and pity: Willoughby storms the citadel at sight by an engaging frankness and impetuosity; Edward Ferrars made love at Norland, while in honour engaged elsewhere; and even the noble Edmund was very fond of holding his little cousin's hand, "with almost as much warmth as if it had been Miss Crawford's."

Elizabeth Bennet dared to practise the art on "Mr. Darcy"; Emma openly encouraged Frank; the Bertrams and Musgroves proved ready enough to respond in kind, if lacking in personality sufficient to initiate. Marianne ignored the world for her "man," with an intrepidity to match his own.

It cannot be that such vivid and varied portraits were drawn from observation alone, without approval or experience. There was, of course, nothing "shocking" in her partiality for Tom Lefroy; but, very possibly, enough innocent and healthy enjoyment to offend the Grundies of her day. Jane *really* preferred "little smiling flirting Julia" to a more sedate "Miss"; loved her cousin the Comtesse no less because, when contemplating a second marriage, she was

"loth to give up dear liberty and dearer flirtation." The laugh at her own expense cannot disguise the honesty of this daring boast: "Mr. H. began with Elizabeth and afterwards danced with her again; but *they* do not know how *to be particular*. I flatter myself, however, that they will profit by the three successive lessons which I have given them."

This passage may be profitably compared with a merry tale of the perils to which a female may be accidentally or intentionally exposed: "Your unfortunate sister was betrayed last Thursday into a situation of the utmost cruelty. I was shut up in the drawing-room with Mr. Holder alone for ten minutes, and nothing could prevail on me to move two steps from the door, on the lock of which I kept one hand constantly fixed."

And when we beg Miss Austen to be serious, whatever doubts remain must vanish in face of facts. Jane Austen has been condemned as unromantic because she did not, apparently, believe in love at first sight. Marianne, who did, "was born to discover the falsehood of her own opinions, to overcome an affection formed so late in life as at seventeen." Those whom Jane really respects, for whom she feels confident of happiness in the future through wisdom of choice, have learned from knowledge both intimate and prolonged. By the conventions of her age for the young people of her set, friendship between the sexes could only be achieved by flirtation.

CHAPTER IV

GENIUS AND WRITING

THERE is certainly no peculiar virtue in precocity as such; and it must remain a matter of opinion whether or no Jane Austen can justly be called precocious. The really remarkable features of her work, apart from its genius, are first the rapidity, considering her high standard and untiring thoroughness in detail, at which, within certain short periods, the work was first written, once or twice revised, and finally polished. It is also evident, I think, that while good taste in language was born in her by normal inheritance, and naturally cultivated by the training and atmosphere of home, she had, almost from the first, a gift for compact expression, and swift, telling, phrase, which is scarcely less marked in unfinished, early work, than in maturity. The careful industry devoted to revision of style so fluent and vigorous without effort, proves her to have consciously striven after perfection. And revision, however conscientious, never diminished or weakened the first, fresh spontaneity of natural liveliness and dash, which is, however, itself somewhat modified in the passing of years. It would be absurd, of course, to claim that Jane Austen was faultless, or always at her best. Art and thought alike are inevitably unequal; and we should, with pleasure rather than regret, abandon the uncritical assumption of early estimates that her art and genius were, unnaturally, born adult; never needing or revealing growth. There is, on the contrary, a development and progression quite easily discernible; leading on, through several phases of maturity, to the depth

and substance, the poise, serenity, and polish, the finished construction and characterization, of *Persuasion*, with its promise of bright sunshine and brave love.

Yet guidance from dates of composition seems more perplexing, the more closely our evidence is examined. We dare not even accept the familiar, and reiterated clues of three tales written at Steventon and three at Chawton with the silence of an unproductive interval at Bath and Southampton. It is the fact that half of the novels were planned and finished in one or more versions, between the ages of nineteen and twenty-two; that these were finally prepared for publication and the remaining half begun and finished between the ages of thirty-four and forty-five. Therefore, roughly speaking, her main work was achieved during fourteen years, or two periods of three and eleven.

But no one of these novels is *known*, positively, to have been ever substantially completed, as we have it, in her youth at Steventon. For those years we can only positively rely for judgment upon the schoolroom fragment, *Love and Freindship*.

There were certainly drastic changes made, apparently at various times, in *Sense and Sensibility* and in *Pride and Prejudice*. Probably those in *Northanger Abbey* were considerable, but not so fundamental. It is not surprising, in the circumstances, that conclusions differ among those who have investigated the evidence with care, as to where we should be best advised to look for what she could produce just after coming of age, what is, in other words, her first finished work.

Sense and Sensibility was invented and written out as *Elinor and Marianne* about 1794; revised, under its present title, in 1797; resumed and prepared for publication during 1810 and 1811. *Elinor and Marianne* was written in "letters" between the sisters who in the published novel are never

apart for even a single day, and it must, therefore, have been entirely reorganized. Though Cassandra describes the version of 1797 as "in its present form," this *may* only refer to the narration in the third person, and offers no evidence as to how much was left to be done at Chawton.

Pride and Prejudice was invented and written down as *First Impressions* between August 1796 and 1797; revised, under its first title, offered for publication, rejected, and put aside, later in 1797. This "I have lop't and crop't so successfully," wrote Jane in 1812, "that I imagine it must be rather shorter than *Sense and Sensibility* altogether." Here, evidently, drastic changes were made at Chawton.

Northanger Abbey was invented and written down, as *Susan*, in 1797 and 1798; prepared for press, with considerable revision, and sold for £10 to Messrs. Crosby and Co. in 1803. As Crosby left the manuscript untouched Jane attempted, under an assumed name, to urge publication, in 1809. The firm replied that they were not bound to publish, but would "take proceedings" against any one else "who might attempt to do so." When four of the novels had been published, with some success, one of her brothers, without of course disclosing authorship, repurchased the MS. and copyright of *Susan* at the original price, in 1816. Preparations were then begun for publication, with the new title of *Catherine*, but the "advertisement" then written (and published in the first, posthumous, edition) apologizes for "those parts of the work which thirteen years have made comparatively obsolete." In March 1817 Jane writes, "*Miss Catherine* is put on the shelf for the present, and I do not know that she will ever come out."

It would seem, then, most probable that our *Northanger Abbey* was the first novel to be completed virtually as published, though very possibly not as Jane herself would

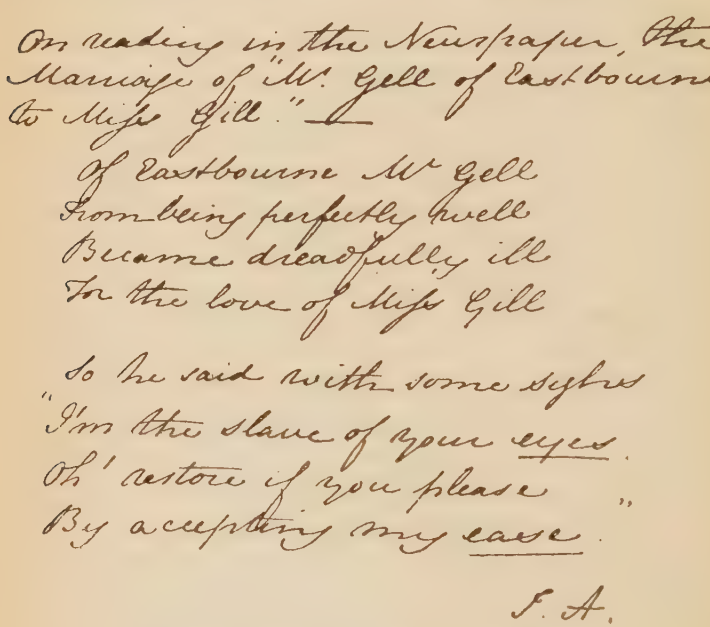
have been content to print. Even so, however, the year of revision is 1803, which takes the author from Steventon to Bath, being already twenty-eight. *Lady Susan* followed, probably, about 1805. The unfinished *Watsons* was written at Southampton in 1807; also intruding upon the supposed middle, or silent, period.

We may, of course, be deceiving ourselves, but internal evidence or judgment by criticism appears to confirm the deductions here summarized.

Northanger Abbey is in direct sequence from *Love and Freindship*, apparently vaguely schemed even earlier in the unpublished *Kitty* (very briefly outlined in the *Life and Letters*, the heroine being called "Catherine"), and is from some aspects rather obviously experimental. Of the other two, *Sense and Sensibility*, invented first, and chosen for earlier issue, has less assurance and self-confidence than *Pride and Prejudice*, though one critic has discovered a certain gusto and poetic ecstasy in Mr. Collins which makes him "perhaps the happiest creature in all her pages"; and there is, undoubtedly, a gay unfettered spirit of youth in the whole story which Jane Austen never quite captured again or elsewhere.

This completed time-table of work establishes what, indeed, has been more or less assumed, that it was Jane Austen's habit to write continuously, starting a new tale practically as soon as its predecessor was completed, or a revision of some earlier work, as the case might be. Activity is further seen to have been continuous even from the writing of *Love and Freindship* at seventeen, if not earlier; and, finally, instead of the ten or twelve years' break usually described, we have—within that period—three short intervals (roughly 1798–1803, 1805–1807; 1807–1809) which correspond with the *actual moves* from Steventon, Bath, and Southampton, and include the deaths of her father, Mrs.

Edward Austen, and her great friend, Mrs. Lefroy; as well as various visits and prolonged house-hunting before leaving Steventon for Bath. Here, surely, is amply sufficient explanation for her not having written much, if anything, in the face of such formidable interruptions and serious trouble; and the temptation vanishes to surmise


On reading in the Newspaper, the Marriage of "Mr. Gell of Eastbourne to Miss Gill."

Of Eastbourne Mr Gell
From being perfectly well
Became dreadfully ill
For the love of Miss Gill

So he said with some sighs
"I'm the slave of your eyes.
Oh! restore if you please
By accepting my ease."

F. A.

FACSIMILE VERSE—"MR. GELL AND MISS GILL"

that she was gravely depressed by any disappointment in love, or discouraged by failure to secure publication of the novels completed but, in the light of maturer judgment, to be revised. Both she may have felt, but they had no power to quell her spirit or curb her industry.

We are finally led to study the birth of Jane's art from the earliest fragments published in the *Life and Letters*, and from *Love and Freindship*; all about the same date, immediately

preceding *Elinor and Marianne*: since, as just concluded, she never stopped writing when she had once begun, and a large proportion of these first attempts has been printed, the earliest within recent years. I do not wish to exaggerate the importance of the "scraps" we have been grateful to receive at different times from various members of her family; but to the critic they are of great importance, *because* of certain qualities, which appear from the first, and remained a feature of her art, thus materially assisting us to understand her development.

We are told that the tales in Jane Austen's "copy books had amounted to a considerable number by the time she was sixteen"; that is before 1792.

Two tales are mentioned: *Jack and Alice* and the *Adventures of Mr. Harley*, which must have been written soon after 1788, as they are dedicated to Frank when he was a midshipman on the *Perseverance*. *The History of England* (in *Love and Freindship*, p. 85) concludes with the inscription, "Finis Saturday, Nov. 26th, 1791"; *Love and Freindship* itself is dated 1790; *Lesley Castle* 1792.

The following dedication of *Kitty or the Bower* is dated August 1792:

To Miss Austen

Madam,—Encouraged by your warm patronage of *The Beautiful Cassandra* and *The History of England*, which, through your generous support, have obtained a place in every library in the Kingdom, and run through four score editions, I take the liberty of begging the same Exertions in favour of the following novel, which, I humbly flatter myself, possesses Merit beyond any already published, or any that will ever in future appear, except such as may proceed from the pen of your most grateful

Humble servant,

The Author.

Henry and Eliza, of which only the name is given, and the *Collection of Letters* (*Love and Freindship*, p. 103) are dedicated

College of the Sequoias
Library

to *Miss* Cooper, which fixes their date before her marriage at the end of 1792 [1]: *The Visit*, also only named, is dedicated to the *Rev.* James, curate at Overton, who married the daughter of an adjoining "Manor House" in 1792.

Now the manuscript of *Love and Freindship, etc.*, is described as "the second volume" of manuscripts left to Cassandra; *Evelyn* and *Kitty* (already mentioned with its date 1792) are to be found in "volume the third" of *Effusions of Fancy by a very Young Lady, consisting of Tales in a Style entirely new*; and were, therefore, perhaps written later. The heroine of *Kitty* is called Catherine, "for what young lady of common gentility will reach the age of sixteen without altering her name as far as she can" [2]; and one of the characters is said to "suggest" Isabella Thorpe. If the date given on the title-page of *Charades*, by Jane Austen and her family—printed in 1895—was precisely intended, these must have been rather later; but we can hardly lay much stress on such a phrase as "written a hundred years ago."

On the other hand, *The Mystery*, which is the only fragment reprinted [3] so far as ever completed by the writer, is said to be a somewhat earlier venture than *Kitty* or *Evelyn*, that is, to have been written when Jane was about fifteen.

The Mystery, a comedy, is dedicated to the Rev. George Austen: "Sir, I humbly solicit your patronage to the following Comedy, which, though an unfinished one, is, I flatter myself, as complete a *Mystery* as any of its kind." It closes with the inscription, "End of the First Act. Finis"; which plainly tells us that we are not to expect any more.

[1] As everything points to the impression that the various parts of *Love and Freindship* are contemporary, we note that Jane's niece, Fanny Catherine Austen, to whom the *Scraps* (p. 129) are dedicated, must have been in her cradle, as Edward Austen (later Knight) only married and settled at Rowling, near Goodnestone, towards the end of 1791. The *Scraps*, however, are there seen to be later than the *History*.

[2] As it is written in *Northanger Abbey* of Sally, or rather Sarah, Morland, Catherine's younger sister.

[3] *Life and Letters*, pp. 53–5.

For this reason I regard it as a complete work; being, like *Lesley Castle* (*Love and Freindship*, p. 47), unfinished, because the author had never intended to trouble herself with "what happened next"; and *not* incomplete like *The Watsons*, which she put aside, though she expected to resume it later, either because she was temporarily dissatisfied and uncertain how to proceed, *or* because circumstances made work just then impossible.

The Mystery is in three scenes: a Garden, a Parlour, and a Sofa. The "Dramatis Personæ" are Old Humbug, Mrs. Humbug, and Young Humbug: with a Colonel; Sir Edward Spangle, "fast asleep in an elegant attitude"; Fanny Elliott, who did something "to no purpose"; Daphne, who explains that "all is over"; and Corydon, who is found alone, as the curtain rises, and exclaiming "But hush: I am interrupted," *exits*—for ever. The "Mystery" is explained by Daphne and the Colonel, in "Whispers," which are *not* given, because, of course, the audience is not supposed to hear them.

This, certainly, is sheer meaningless nonsense, and it might be added, without point or plot: just the kind of nonsense, however, in which her family delighted and excelled. Gaily acted, with unselfconscious exaggeration of tone and gesture, it would provoke a laugh. The actual dialogue is spirited, well-written, and dramatic: not a word wasted or out of place.

Already we see that Jane is using her pen to make fun of her predecessors. Every line is a reminiscence—of false drama, artificial characterization, vain repetition, and sentimental excitement about we know not what.

I do not for one moment wish to suggest that Miss Austen composed gay trifles of this description with any deliberate intention of burlesquing, to expose, bad art. No such idea, we may feel confident, was actually present—as a theory or

serious purpose—in the larger and far more brilliant sketches of *Love and Freindship.*

But in both she was subconsciously directed, we need not say inspired, by her instinctive recognition of artificiality and falseness to life: as the home atmosphere, the natural speech, and intimate correspondence of her family, not to speak of their published, or more serious, writing, had given her, by inheritance and association, the instinct of taste and an easy, pure style: by something born in her alone rendered swift and epigrammatic.

And *The Mystery* (as again, more obviously in more ambitious and finer expression, *Love and Freindship*) is sheer intellect without heart; an unsentimental exercise of the mind rather than the imagination; a piece of pen-play, purposely cold and sharp, that would be cynical had it been ever intended to concern itself with even a hint of any relation to humanity or real life.

Whether Jane ever pictured herself a "Cinderella of the Rectory"; ever dreamed of the prince who should one day come riding by to carry her off to his father's palace; we do not know. There was no such vision in her *Effusions of Fancy.* Hers was "a style entirely new." At present there is not a spark of poetry or romance in her composition. She had, apparently, no "tender sensibility to conquer," in part, maybe, because "the cruel persecutions of an obstinate father" had never blighted her young life. In her tales, "eternal misery" did *not* mean "a moment's disappointment about a bit of a letter"; nor was "everlasting happiness" secured by "two people talking nonsense together for five minutes." [1] They did not "turn our girls' heads wild with impossible adventures."

As a judgment of her own nature, *or* of her art in its

[1] Hannah More, in *The Two Farmers*, on novels "where nothing ever happens in a natural way."

maturity, such an impression must be stated emphatically to be entirely incorrect; though it was prevalent once, and has been too often maintained, or rather assumed. Her letters, particularly some published since Lord Brabourne's collection, and the universal testimony of those who knew, have established—what understanding criticism ought never to have missed—that she was a woman of strong and deep feelings, and a writer who could express emotion with sincerity and power. From the first the characters of her maturity are drawn from the heart, particularly in the earliest of all, which has persuaded us into love for even the artifices of sensibility.

Jane's experiments in fiction were invented for home consumption; the Austens are known to have been very reserved, seldom caring to *talk* about anything deeply felt. And in the cheerful home circle, peculiarly free from jealousies or misunderstanding, there was little or no temptation to solitary communing with their own souls, brooding melancholy, fits of repentance or rebellion; little or no occasion for gazing upon the stars or dreaming beneath the moon: whence is born the poetry of youth.

Speaking of *Love and Freindship* it has indeed been said that:

> In Jane Austen the usual order of development is reversed. Most people are born with a heart and develop a head; but Jane seems to have arrived intellectually complete, the late-born child of the age of cold reason, every faculty alert; but with a heart so fast asleep, so briared and wintered over by wit, caution, and common sense, that it is a wonder it ever woke at all. That it did wake, to warm like a slow-rising sun her chill and glittering world, the novels show in delicious gradation, as one by one they merge the cruel wit of her childhood in the rich humour of her prime.[1]

Now in the first place this is to confuse the author with her book: to assume that because she did not express emotion she had none to express. And, secondly, so far as writing

[1] Miss Clemence Dane in a review of *Love and Freindship*.

and all art are concerned, the "order of development" observed in Jane Austen is the normal and natural order. For any one gifted with the power of expression is, at first, so intoxicated with his possession that he must fall in love with wit; the play on words—whether it come to him as a flower of eloquence or in haunting musical phrase—doth so flatter his sense of superiority to his fellows that he must be for ever twisting and turning them over for his own delight, flinging them upon a wondering world to exult in their astonished admiration. Even Shakespeare, master of dreamers, spent his youth on *Love's Labour's Lost*, with its "brilliant unrealities, affectations of dress, of manner, of language, and of ideas." If a man is normal, happy, and healthy his art is born in the brain. It is time alone, binding him by a thousand hopes and fears, a thousand tortures and delights, to his neighbours and friends, that can teach him the true beauty of the heart.

In *Love and Freindship* we can clearly discern the real beginnings of Jane Austen's art, though not, indeed, with any certainty, just when it woke to consciousness of its power, transforming a favourite diversion into a serious pursuit destined to dominate life and thought. It is impossible, I think, to doubt that, at any rate, *Elinor and Marianne* was written for publication. Miss Austen's outlook from that date, if not even earlier, was more professional and consciously literary, for instance, than Fanny Burney's had been when writing *Evelina*. It was probably subconscious in *Love and Freindship*, but none the less an influence and a guide.

During her last illness she wrote from Winchester to Caroline, a young daughter of James, who was only twelve at the time of her aunt's death, that "she often wished she had read more and written less in the corresponding years of her own life." The allusion need not be taken too literally as applying to nursery days, but no doubt covers

the sketches and tales we have been considering. I imagine, also, that it was reading of a more or less serious kind for culture or information that she felt had been neglected; for, though no doubt she was quick at forming impressions and detecting the general characteristics of popular style, *Love and Freindship* almost proves her familiarity with foolish novels, though some of these may well have been read aloud.

It helps us, however, to realize—one might almost say it offers proof—that she had never been a realist in the modern sense: which is to say that no desire or urge towards faithful reproduction of life and man for its own sake ever drove her to verbal photography; she certainly never wrote to analyse the Truth, or to expose its ugliness.

For Jane always a novel was a romance, not perhaps especially romantic, but a straightforward love-story, with happiness its natural and proper goal. It did not, I imagine, occur to her, as it probably never occurred to Scott, that fiction could develop on any different lines, that the model was in any way limited by convention, or needed enlarging by variation. While he was doing the "big bow-wow strain like any now going," she was writing on her "little bits of ivory," neither with any idea of creating new fiction forms. Her love of truth, one of the strongest elements of her nature, was to be revealed in the careful reality of human nature in every character and conversation: a protest passionately felt against the falseness and unhealthy emotionalism of contemporary fiction, expressed by way of burlesque in *Love and Freindship*, where the lie is exposed by imitation exaggerated to absurdity. She was, in fact, carrying on the good work of the fathers of the English novel.

Richardson, invited to write "a little book of familiar letters on the useful concerns in common life," transformed this dry conception into a natural story "different from the

pomp and parade of romance-writing, dismissing the improbable and marvellous with which novels usually abound." Fielding, claiming "the vast authentic book of nature" as authority "for all his characters," declared that his "labours had sufficient title to the name of history." He insists, again and again, upon the distinction between "what is true and genuine in this historic kind of writing, from what is false and counterfeit in foolish novels and monstrous romances."

Finally Scott, recognizing that the novel "was the legitimate child of romance," deplores the "conduct of the narrative and the tone of sentiment attributed to the fictitious personages"; until "a style of novel had arisen within the last fifteen or twenty years," where Miss Austen "stands almost alone," which reveals "the art of copying from nature as she really exists in the common walks of life, and presenting to the reader, instead of the splendid scenes of an imaginary world, a correct and striking representation of that which is daily taking place around him."

It is "the pomp and parade of romance-writing," "the false and counterfeit in silly novels and monstrous romances," which Jane Austen so shrewdly slaughtered with a laugh, though, assuredly, there was love behind the laughter. Like Isabella, and that "sweet girl, the amazingly insipid" Miss Andrews, she devoured everything "uncommonly dreadful, shocking, and horrid"; she could "cope with" Henry Tilney "in a knowledge of Julias and Louisas," for she had read "hundreds and hundreds" of novels: "her hair standing on end the whole time." She still found "all Mrs. Radcliffe's works, and the works of all her imitators charming"; even after discovering that "it was not in them, perhaps, that human nature, at least in the midland counties, was to be found."

Her concern was with "human nature in the midland counties," and the huge delight with which she elected to

reanimate and "dress up" these "dear, familiar faces" of manly males and swooning females for the entertainment of her "sisters and her cousins" and her nieces, may be regarded as but a fond farewell to the follies of her youth. We can justly read into them what is there, and what reveals the as yet unrealized impulse of her own art; though not, I think, consciously intended or directly expressed: a fierce scorn and passionate detestation towards the travesties of human nature here given a new, short, lease of life—the sparkling parodies of their first prolonged and troubled existence in the dreary pages of romance.

The Plan of a Novel (p. 208 below), written in 1816, that is only a year before her death, shows that she never lost the joy of making fun with the absurdities of romance: *and* that her taste in the matter was fully appreciated and shared by all the family.

Towards the end of her life Jane warned her niece, Caroline, "against spending too much time" upon novels. "She said—how well I recollect it!—that she knew writing stories was a great amusement, and *she* thought a harmless one, though many people, she was aware, thought otherwise."

There is always a risk of taking Jane, or at least her written words, more seriously than she would wish. To the end of her life she found "writing stories a great amusement"; and here, at its start, we must not suppose more than that. *Love and Freindship* should be read and enjoyed for what Chesterton rightly calls its "gigantic inspiration of laughter," for the "natural exuberance" of one who "could have been a buffoon if she chose." He would be an intolerable prig who stopped to analyse and estimate as he turned the page. It is only when we have wiped our streaming eyes and our sides are no longer shaking that we may permit ourselves to turn away from her book to Jane herself; to wonder why she did it and to learn, if possible, something new and, maybe,

surprising, about the novels it precedes and to some extent anticipates.

Chesterton describes the title-story as "a satire on *the fable* of the fainting lady"; adding most wisely, "but it is the *whole point* of this little skit that the swoon of sensibility is not satirized because it was a fact, even in the sense of a fashion, but satirized solely because it was a fiction."

That is the key to the whole mystery of her art. Jane began writing because she enjoyed nearly everything, "provided that nothing like useful knowledge could be gained from" it, that had ever *been* written: because she was innocently intoxicated with the gift God had given her, to fling her fun at us with an unerring certainty of aim that never misses its objective, and bestows in passing the true sportsman's "neatness upon the nonsense." We shall see, later, that the earlier novels themselves were, in a far more subtle fashion, but not less certainly, variations upon the persons and plots of her predecessors; that, to the end, she always *composed* life and character according to the conventions of fiction; achieving vitality, reality, and truth, not by slavish copying of actual patterns from experience, but by understanding and loving faithfulness to human nature in characterization; fitting truth and reality into art and imagination, but still creating a picture in the manner of the old masters.

Her love of stories led her to write stories; the faults she early detected in them set her in the right way; her own genius, nurtured and encouraged, as we have seen, by inheritance and the home circle, made of her story-telling a fine art. But they remained stories always, not documents. She used experience and her insight into human nature, without doubt; but she was not inspired by the follies or vices of her fellow-creatures; by any sense of superior isolation or impatient discontent with her quiet, domestic, and (as

she *might* have felt but did not) empty and trivial existence.

The evidence for her love of reading is overwhelming. Again and again in the *Letters*, in every one of the novels, we find that agreeable, intelligent people are great readers: that fools and vulgarians, or "men of no information," like Robert Martin, do not read books. The "superior" characters possess good libraries; it is the charming habit of heroes to "recommend" the best books to young ladies who are, one and all, long used to *good* reading aloud. It would almost seem as if character were measured by literary taste; and we can read a dangerous partiality for the wicked Crawford into the sad admission that he and Fanny had "moral and literary tastes in common." Like many of us who have grown in the atmosphere of universities, she was at times scarcely able to distinguish between these two forms of "taste," believing, I suspect, that they were commonly to be found together. In a private letter she writes: "*Our* family are great novel-readers, and not ashamed of being so."

For Jane was a reader, not a scholar. The classical and critical accomplishments of her father and elder brothers, whatever their extent, *are* reflected in the purity of her style; and they surrounded her with the habit of putting thoughts into words with ease. But, though usually expressed with half a smile and half a blush at her own detestation of "enormous great stupid thick quarto volumes," she plainly reveals her indifference to text-books (though her preference for Cowper and Dr. Johnson is academically sound enough), and she expressed a few occasional judgments on great writers and great books impossible to one really cultured in the *formal* sense of the word. On novels, however, her critical sense, which was largely common sense, and very conspicuously good sense, was exceedingly alert. It provided the foundation of her art.

CHAPTER V

FOLLY BURLESQUED

Now that *Love and Freindship* and the fragments completing that sheaf of glorious nonsense have, at long last, been presented to the public, we can see how many common features of common fiction they directed Jane Austen to avoid. We see just why she resolved to replace falsehood by truthfulness; just what she determined henceforth to leave out: in characterization, in plot, and in style.

For hero and heroine of the "old order" were not quite human, but also superhuman. *He*, of course, was incredibly brave and strong, skilled in every variety of attack and defence, quick at playing a part to outwit villainy, long-suffering when—in the early chapters—he was beaten by numbers or by deceit. Though in certain cases, as Scott points out, permitted considerable moral licence, he was, "in every folly of which he might be guilty, studiously vindicated from the charge of infidelity of the heart." The heroine, though becomingly timid and ignorantly innocent, could endure and survive the most devastating disasters; and "was, of course, still more immaculate. To have conferred her affections upon any other than the lover to whom the reader had destined her from their first meeting would have been a crime against sentiment which no author of moderate prudence would have hazarded under the old regime." Even where, as once at least in Fielding and generally in Smollett, almost the entire narrative is taken up by descrip-

tions of the hero's deep or casual wayside infatuations, he not only firmly believes, but easily persuades the heroine that "they were different," and that he never left off loving *her* for one minute. This manifest insincerity or self-deception has been rather less crudely revived in this twentieth century among the literary *élite*; but Jane Austen would have none of it; and it was more, I suspect, from heroes than from any "gentleman of her acquaintance" that she was led to pass judgments on this matter, that seem almost cold and hard; directed, perhaps, as much to the hypocrisy as the sin.

It was also necessary by the code that heroines, and to a minor extent also heroes, should possess a certain affected refinement of the heart, a susceptibility to delicate emotions, a readiness to swamp action and thought in ecstasy or despair, which set them in a class apart from ordinary human beings; superior in mind, but singularly incapable in the practical conduct of life.

Here is a super-heroine of the period, described in terms which show how slightly Jane Austen exaggerated from her models, though just enough to make them obviously ridiculous:

> Madeline Clermont was tall and delicately made, nor was the symmetry of her features inferior to that of her bodily form. Her eyes large, and of the darkest hazel, ever true to the varying emotions of her soul, languished beneath their long silken lashes with all the softness of sensibility, and sparkled with all the fire of animation; her hair, a rich auburn, added luxuriance to her beauty, and by a natural curl gave an expression of the greatest innocence to her face; the palest blush of health just tinted her dimpled cheek and her mouth, adorned by smiles, appeared like the half-blown rose when moistened by the dews of early morn.

The ladies of *Love and Freindship* are always fainting "alternately on sofas," or "in the open air as the dew was falling"; warming their blood by "repeated fits of frenzy";

or raving madly "for two hours," but "not in the least fatigued." We should suspect Jane Austen of over-doing the picture if Macaulay had not counted and tabulated the "twenty-seven fainting fits" in *Santa Sebastiano*, by Kitty Cuthbertson; if the Man of Feeling had not died from shock, because Miss Walton "confessed that she could return his love"; if Sarah Fielding had not told us of a young person "who fell from one fainting fit to another, and lived but three days," because her father forgave her. Both Evelina and Cecilia, too, pass through scenes of complete nervous prostration, equally violent when occasioned by sudden joy or prolonged despair. And we do not forget that Laurence Sterne "could never see or talk to the incomparable Mrs. Draper without bursting into tears"; that he often boasted of having "torn his whole frame into pieces by his feelings"; while Yorick, if no gay grisette were at hand, "would fasten his affections upon some sweet myrtle, or seek some melancholy cypress to connect himself to." For a particular reason, to be discussed later, Jane Austen after all discovered some charm and virtue in Sensibility that was sincere.

It was no less necessary in these stories that the "wicked should be completely depraved and infamous, with hardly a resemblance of humanity left in them" [1]; whether illustrated by "the cruel persecutions of obstinate fathers," or the "pine forests and the vices" of the Pyrenees, where "poison and sleeping potions could be procured, like rhubarb, from every druggist." Once more, Jane Austen would have none of these, refusing even to "dwell on guilt and misery," choosing "to quit such odious subjects" as soon as she could; even in the sad case of Maria Bertram, who though scarcely "as spotless as an angel," had not "the dispositions of a fiend." It is, however, that "young lady of feeling,"

[1] See "The Plan of a Novel," p. 208.

Pickering, pinxt. *Greatbatch, sculpt.*

FRONTISPIECE TO "SENSE AND SENSIBILITY," 1833

Then taking a small miniature from her pocket, she added, "To prevent the possibility of a mistake, be so good as to look at this face."

Miss Anna Parker, who represents the "complete villain" with comprehensive finality:

> "I murdered my father at a very early period of my life, I have since murdered my mother, and I am now going to murder my sister. I have changed my religion so often that at present I have not an idea of any left. I have been a perjured witness in every public trial for these last twelve years and I have forged my own will. In short, there is scarcely a crime that I have not committed."

There is, finally, a great deal in the popular, or usual, plot with which Jane Austen has no patience. The stock heroes or heroines of romance should acknowledge a strangely varied and mixed descent, frequently "natural"; which makes their *un*mixed characters the more surprising. The noble Edward, whose "name was Lindsay," though "concealed under that of Talbot," and his "most particular friend" Augustus: "of whom it could never be said that they had obliged a father," would "have blushed at the idea of paying their debts." Gustavus and Philander, "when they had reached their fifteenth year took nine hundred pounds" from their mothers and ran away. They were "the sons of the two youngest daughters which Lord St. Clair had by Laurina, an Italian opera girl. Our mothers could neither of them exactly ascertain who were our father[s], though it is generally believed that Philander is the son of one Philip Jones, a bricklayer, and that my father was Gregory Staves, a staymaker of Edinburgh. This is, however, of little consequence, for as our mothers were certainly never married to either of them it reflects no dishonour on our blood, which is of a most ancient and unpolluted kind." Laura, who married Edward, explains that *her* "father was a native of Ireland, and an inhabitant of Wales: my mother was the natural daughter of a Scotch peer" (in fact, Lord St. Clair), by an Italian opera-girl.

[1] *Love and Freindship*, p. 136.

"I was born in Spain, and received my education in France." We are not surprised to read that his lordship, on "descending from a coronetted coach and four," and unexpectedly meeting his four young relatives for the first time, should mildly inquire: "but tell me, have I any other grandchildren in the house?" Such bewildering complications constantly arise in the novels of the period, and Fanny Burney did not disdain to make Evelina's discovery of a long-lost father a serious occasion for the extremes of romantic sensibility.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the customary adventures of the hero who "defeated armies by his single sword, clove giants to the chine or gained kingdoms"; who "was expected to go through perils of sea and land, to be steeped in poverty, to be tried by temptation, to be exposed to the alternate vicissitudes of adversity and prosperity." We know that the heroine "was regularly exposed to being forcibly carried off like a Sabine virgin by some frantic admirer.[1] And even if she escaped the terrors of masked ruffians, an insidious ravisher, a cloak wrapped forcibly around her head, and a coach with the blinds down driving she could not conjecture whither, she had still her share of wandering, of poverty, of obloquy, of seclusion, and of imprisonment." As a further element of "surprise and horror, robbers, smugglers, bailiffs, caverns, dungeons, and madhouses, are all introduced till they cease to interest." [2]

The adventure of *Love and Freindship* is crude and wild. Edward finds himself in Wales, on the way from Bedfordshire to Middlesex, "with not a single star to direct his steps." Laura dragged her Sophia "instantly to London," and inquired of "every decently-looking person" they

[1] As Richardson relates of Harriet Byron, and Fanny Burney of Evelina.
[2] The descriptions are quoted from Scott's article on *Emma*.

passed in Holborn if they had seen him, but "drove too rapidly to allow them to answer." Their later wanderings over Scotland and "the remainder of Great Britain" end in "confusion, despair, and precipitation." One fatal morning they hear a phaeton which "ran murmuring behind them"; and "hastening to the field of action," discover "two gentlemen most elegantly attired but weltering in their blood"; who prove to be their husbands, "but a few moments before in so elevated a situation as a fashionably high phaeton, now laid low and sprawling in the dust." With such examples before her we can perhaps better understand why Jane Austen so resolutely cut out adventure from her own fiction.

From time to time novelists were moved by the spirit of derision to expose the follies of fiction by exaggeration, as George Eliot later poured scorn on silly novels by lady novelists in the direct and forceful criticism of a lively article in *The Westminster Review*. But the nearest works, both in date and character, to Jane Austen's burlesque, were written by one whose original work could scarcely have been more completely diverse. William Beckford, author of *Vathek*, published two open taunts at his fellow-writers in story form: *Modern Novel Writing*,[1] 1796, and *Azemia*, by J. A. M. Jenks, 1798, which have much of Miss Austen's gay vigour, though clothed in far less wit. He is indebted, he tells us, to Miss Lee, Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Smith, "the soul-petrifying Radcliffe" and "Mrs. Gunning's novels and those of her amiable daughter, to whom I owe all in these little volumes that pretends to draw the characters and manners of high life."

He copies Mrs. Radcliffe very closely at times, imitates—

[1] The full title of this somewhat rare volume is: *Modern Novel Writing, or the Elegant Enthusiast and Interesting Emotions of Arabella Bloomville. A Rhapsodical Romance; Interspersed with Poetry.* 2 vols. By the Rt. Hon. Lady Harriet Marlow.

very much in the Austen vein—the familiar high-sounding "dedication," and indulges in such luxuries of description as:

> At the foot of a verdant declivity overshadowed by woodbine, jessamine and myrtle, and softly inundated by a sapphire rivulet that wandered through the neighbouring woods in serpentine simplicity, stood the sweet and elegant retired cottage of Arabella Bloomville.

Or in nonsense which approaches the ravings of Laura herself:

> Now Margaret Grimes, having but first gathered the mistletoe, could not give the wondering Arabella any further means of unravelling the clue, for the patient villagers were for the most part retired to their placid rest, and unfortunately the mail coach had neither brought the oysters nor the French dictionary.

Hannah More most wittily describes the "wild gibberish" and "nonsensical fellows" of popular fiction, where "nobody is middling, but all up to the skies or down to the dirt." Susan Ferrier made fun of the "Birmingham Cupids" beloved of "boarding-school Misses, militia officers, and milliners' apprentices"—as Maria Edgeworth denounced them in her *Angelina, or L'Amie Inconnue.* Miss Mitford has left us an admirable receipt for novels by Mrs. Opie, of whom Sydney Smith said wickedly that "tenderness was her forte, and carelessness her fault."

"One knows the usual ingredients of her tales, just as one knows the component parts of plum-pudding. So much common sense (for the flour), so much vulgarity (for the suet), so much love (for the sugar), so many songs (for the plums), so much wit (for the spices), so much fine binding morality (for the eggs), and so much mere mawkishness and insipidity (for the milk and water, wherewith the said pudding is mixed up)."

While on the turn of the century, after *Northanger Abbey* was written, but before its publication, silly novels were

assisted to their grave by the novel-burlesque *Romance Readers and Romance Writers* (1810) of Mrs. S. Green, and that clever allegory of the Lunarians or moon-folk, *The Heroine or the Adventures of Cherubina* (1812) by Eaton Stannard Barret, Esq.[1]; who also ridiculed *All the Talents*. Mrs. Green's heroine "had the true Cleopatra back," and being "persecuted by one brutal uncle, a rigid father, and a rustic sister," pressed "the discoloured linen to her eyes only to dry the effusions of a benevolent and too sensible heart." Mr. Stannard Barret developed the ingenious idea that novel persons "ascend through the regions of air to the moon," where they acquire "a sentient soul or spirit" which, however, dies as soon as the story becomes obsolete and is forgotten on earth. The "mountains in the moon" have materialized from "descriptions in romance." Here we read of a heroine "doomed to endure the security of a home," who, being a lady of taste, "would infinitely prefer the desolation of a castle to the comforts of a villa." Her female domestic servant considerately explains in what way "romances and novels contaminate the mind."

"Why, mem, by teaching little misses to go gadding, mem, and to be fond of the men, mem, and of spangled muslin, mem." It was thus, no doubt, that Catherine Morland acquired her pretty taste in muslins, and that Henry Tilney was able to guess so exactly the price of Mrs. Allen's favourite gown.

Jane herself was familiar with *The Heroine*, and naturally enjoyed it. On March 2, 1814, she writes: "I finished *The Heroine* last night, and was very much amused by it. I wonder James did not like it better. It diverted me exceedingly. . . . We have drank tea, and I have torn through the third volume of *The Heroine*. I do not think it

[1] Edited by Sir Walter Raleigh for the *Oxford Miscellany*.

falls off. It is a delightful burlesque, particularly on the Radcliffe style."

There is also an amusing summary of popular fiction, the very readable and well-read *Fifty Years' Recollections* of Cyrus Redding, not published till 1858, but referring to the period when "the supremacy of folly was acknowledged by those who sought reputation." We had, he writes:

"The fashionable, the languishing, and the furious. Ancient Greeks used to talk in them in good English, and knew more of London than Athens. Cherokees were represented as sentimental, and love sometimes becoming too deficient in excitement, was exchanged for the hazards and perjuries of genteel adultery." Here is another hint of the many things Jane Austen determined to avoid; another record of artificiality and passion-drama.

So far as we may seek for any actual foretaste of Jane Austen's mature art, *Love and Freindship* has little to offer. We have said, and the quotations given will establish, that she already revealed certain marked characteristics of style which remained a part of her peculiar distinction. Here as always she plunges into the heart of the tale in her opening paragraph: here as always she packs a character or a scene into a few telling, well-marshalled phrases. Apart from certain obvious immaturities, the work is less careful or correct in many details; but this may mean no more than that, in writing only for herself and friends as a private joke, she did not consider hard labour well spent.

One small point is interesting, though I am uncertain of its significance. She had, as indeed the novels amply testify, and her letters occasionally reveal, a very definite feeling for names: evidently partial to some, and associating inferiority of character with others. In *Love and Freindship* we meet not only Charlotte, Edward, Marianne, Jane, and Maria, but Annesley, Musgrove, Cleveland, Crawford,

Dashwood, and Willoughby. It is curious, again, to read so early of a heroine who "had seen the world. She had passed two years at one of the first boarding-schools in London, had spent a fortnight in Bath, and had supped one night in Southampton."

There is, finally, one matchless phrase in which she seems, by uncanny foresight, to have epitomized the scene within which she was always content to work: "Our neighbourhood was small, for it consisted only of your mother."

Chesterton suggests in various passages an echo of Mr. Bennet, a hint of Fanny Price; but there is one almost complete character-sketch in the third "Letter" of the "Comical Cousin's Collection" (*Love and Freindship*, p. 109) which is a finely-touched, life-like study of Lady Catherine de Burgh; her ordinary conversation, her impertinent curiosity, and her genius for insulting the young. It recalls, too, Miss de Burgh's "abominable rudeness" in "keeping Charlotte out-of-doors in all this wind." Here Maria Williams was "obliged to stand" beside Lady Greville's coach door, "though the wind was extremely high and very cold." Lady Greville having taken Maria to a ball and consoled her, on the way, for the poverty of her clothes, by assuring her that "one half of the people in the room will not know whether you have a gown on or not"; interrupts her dance with a wealthy and agreeable partner, by loudly inquiring whether her grandfather was " a grocer or a bookbinder, I know he was in some such low way. He broke, did not he, or died insolvent? Was not he in the Kings Bench once?"

The following morning her ladyship stops at Maria's door and sends in a message for her to come out, "in the middle of dinner":

"I came to tell you, Miss Maria, that you may dine with us the day

after to-morrow. Not to-morrow, do not come to-morrow, for we expect Lord and Lady Clermont and Sir Thomas Stanley's family. There will be no occasion for your being very fine, for I shant send the carriage. If it rains you may take an umbrella." I could hardly help laughing at hearing her give me leave to keep myself dry. "And pray remember to be in time, for I shant wait. I hate my victuals overdone. . . . It is a horrible east wind. I assure you I can hardly bear the window down. But you are used to be blown about by the wind, Miss Maria, and that is what has made your complexion so rudely and coarse. You young ladies who cannot often ride in a carriage never mind what weather you trudge in, or how the wind shows your legs. I would not have *my* girls stand out of doors as you do in such a day as this. But some sort of people have no feelings either of cold or delicacy."

Jane Austen clearly did not forget these first-fruits of her pen, and must have regarded them with some affection, as they were among her papers at her death.

Though *Love and Freindship* was not, probably, written as an exercise in composition, I am inclined to think that a later work, altogether isolated in style and subject from either the novels or any other fragment, was definitely so designed. For her a novel meant a domestic love-story and, since she had debarred herself from adventure or crime, the difficulties and delays which are necessary *to make a plot* required some sort of domestic villain who would—most naturally—be a "vamp," to present the reverse, or dark, side of personal charm, as its sunny surface reflected the heroine. We have already seen that Jane Austen did not naturally feel at home with the wicked. To her, certainly, this section of the novel, as it would always be the most complex, would need special attention and care; and she, therefore, decided to prepare a model or manikin villain, Lady Susan, as a kind of first-aid to novel-writing or encyclopædia of a sinner's mind.

Such a view, at any rate, explains the difficulty often expressed of understanding how Jane Austen ever came to write anything so entirely different not only from her work,

but opposed to what it seems clear she always *desired* to write, we might almost say, what she considered that a novel should be. Moreover, if definitely projected as an exercise, never intended for her private pleasure or for the public, she had no occasion to trouble with putting reality or life into the character-type, giving it just that touch of humanity altogether ignored in *Love and Freindship*, but *never* wanting in her serious, professional, work.[1] And, finally, as a mere study or sketch, there was no compulsion on Jane to round off the story, or go on writing another page, after it had served its purpose. Certainly she would have contrived to enlarge the plot, put things in proper proportions, and greatly increase the length of the story, had she designed publication. She did not ever attempt, professionally, a short story. But though the correspondence is discontinued, with apparent abruptness, "to the great detriment of the post office revenue," and a "conclusion" provided in third-person narrative, I see no reason to suppose that she ever contemplated elaborating the final episodes of the story, or that any such revisions or additions are required to complete or polish the character-sketch. Actually, the virtuous heroine *is* happily married, so soon as Reginald had conquered "his attachment to her mother," and could be "talked, flattered, and finessed into an affection" for Frederica—that is, "in a course of a twelvemonth." And the villain is finally driven off the stage defeated and disgraced. For her happiness in the future "she had nothing against her but her husband and her conscience."

Lady Susan was carefully studied, and is presented with great skill as the villain-heroine of the piece. She has a confidante and accomplice, I regret to say, a Mrs. Johnson[2];

[1] There are, possibly, a few examples of inhuman, or not humanized, characters in the novels: special cases which are discussed later.

[2] I hope *not* a parent of the enterprising Fanny Johnson, in the "Scraps" (*Love and Freindship*, p. 138), "who took a great many drawings of the country

but absolutely no heart, no principles, and no conscience. Yet "her countenance is absolutely sweet, her voice and manner winningly mild: an excessively pretty woman, delicately fair, with fine grey eyes and dark eyelashes," though actually middle-aged. The scene of her daily occupations, the stimulus to her depravity, is the happy home, which she can "rob of its peace in return for the hospitality with which she was received into it." Though "the females of the family united against her"; and as the story opens, a recent scandal had driven her to that "unsupportable spot, a country village"—the scene of all Jane's peaceful comedies—she contrives, at one and the same time, to achieve an incalculable amount of mischief, and break many hearts of varied age, wisdom, and wealth. Her most deadly machinations are inspired by scorn and jealousy of her own daughter, whose "feelings" she cynically describes as "tolerably acute. Frederica is so charmingly artless in their display as to afford the most reasonable hope of her being ridiculous, and despised by every man who sees her." But the child may prove useful as the wife of a lover of whom Lady Susan was growing weary and, to prepare her for matrimony, she had been sent to a school in Wigmore Street, where "the price was immense and much beyond what her ladyship could ever attempt to pay." As villain Lady Susan is, properly, never permitted success in the end. Though injuring, in some degree, literally every person in the story, she is finally defeated by her daughter, who detaches her from the very man whose fortune she had decided to marry, the hero himself. It is still possible, however, that she might be considered more foolish and empty-headed than actively criminal, had not Jane Austen, with that

which were very beautiful, tho' not perhaps such exact resemblances as might be wished from their being taken as she ran along beside her mother's little pony which galloped all the way."

deceptive calm she often employs for her most deadly attacks on sin or folly, let us into the secret that her ladyship was quite prepared to incite others to murder, if sure she would never be found out.

Mrs. Johnson, no doubt, perfectly understood the great lady's wish and intention: "Mainwaring is more devoted to me than ever, and were we at liberty, I doubt if I could resist even matrimony offered by *him*. This event, if his wife live with you, it may be in your power to hasten. The violence of feelings, which must wear her out, may easily be kept in irritation. I rely on your friendship for this."

It must be admitted that Jane Austen never used this type, though the well-informed Isabella was a vain coquette, "who could discover a flirtation between any gentleman and lady who only smiled on each other, and point out a quiz through the thickness of a crowd." To show "her resolution of humbling the sex, she hurried off Catherine as fast as they could walk, in pursuit of the two young men." But she is not clever enough to do much harm, no more than a pale imitation of Lady Susan. Lydia Bennet once imagined herself "tenderly flirting with six officers at once," but she had no finesse. The vamps in Jane Austen's novels are all men. Henry Crawford, like her ladyship, "did not confine himself to that sort of honest flirtation which satisfies most people, but aspired to the more delicious gratification of making a whole family miserable." Both Willoughby and Wickham express their depravity by heart-breaking: Frank Churchill distinguished "one young woman with persevering attention, while he really belonged to another"; his "affection and faith engaged, and with manners so *very* disengaged. How could he tell what mischief he might be doing?" Even Captain Wentworth and Edward Ferrars are led, more by circumstances than lack of principle, to similar dangerous indiscretions.

Miss Austen's reason, of course, more instinctive than calculated, for transferring villainy to the men, was, however, fundamental. A natural loyalty to one's own sex influences us all, however romantic our attitude towards opposites; but every writer not purely frivolous or governed by affectation, sooner or later discovers within himself some undercurrent of purpose in his work, some message, not pedantic or fanatical, but a matter of the deepest conviction, which in time comes to dominate his art. Jane Austen's innermost aim and inspiration was truthful portraiture of her own sex; a determination, through her own quietly effective and affectionate raillery, to burst the bubble of man's complacent vanity, and teach him that women had minds of their own, moral standards of their own, and a far quicker sense for character, finer tact, stronger powers of endurance and fidelity. She was not, in the accepted sense, a feminist; never an agitator for what are called women's rights. She had no notion of women having careers or looking down upon domesticities. Like Elizabeth Bennet she could not imagine happiness with a man she did not respect; and like Emma Woodhouse she assumed that a husband should guide and counsel his wife on serious questions of philosophy and learning. Public affairs and the practical management of daily life were naturally and properly his concern, demanding a well-informed intellectual judgment outside her capacity. Yet the "History of England" (in *Love and Freindship*) shows that she had opinions of her *own* on some political questions of the past. Her marginal notes in a copy of Goldsmith's *History* are even more vigorous and excitable. When the author passes verdict against the Stuarts, Jane, probably in about her thirteenth year, remarks, "a family who were always ill-used, betrayed, or neglected, whose virtues are seldom allowed while their errors are never forgotten." When Anne is said to have deserted her family's

cause for her brother-in-law's sake, Jane's indignation is only tempered by incredulity: "Anne should not have done so, *indeed, I do not believe she did.*" Yet, no less positively and emphatically than Miss Dorothy Richardson herself,[1] most advanced of modern feminists, she puts men in their place in all the refinements of nice feeling, and in moral or spiritual emotion, in real understanding of human nature. She establishes a free-masonry for her sex which man cannot enter; seeing him always in such matters a little childlike, a dear blunderer amidst the intricacies of the female heart. And here, once more, it is the teachings or characterization of her fellow-craftsmen she is determined to correct.

"If you please," said Anne Elliot, "no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything." And her words are prompted by a passionate protest against false judgments of her sex.

On the surface even we recognize that the revelation of women was Jane Austen's business in the development of the English novel. She was largely influenced by Fanny Burney, who had added that particular achievement, so far as she had the power, to the Richardson-Fielding pioneer work of drawing novel-persons from real life. Jane wrote openly, after *Evelina* the first story ever so written, as a woman painting life from the woman's point of view, speaking for and to women. Mrs. Delany and Lady Louisa Stuart had forced recognition of intellectual equality upon their friends; the Blue-stockings had achieved some measure of public sufferance; Fanny Burney had cleansed the circulating libraries, and compelled the world to admit that a girl could read, and even write, novels but remain respectable. Jane

[1] Author of *Pointed Roofs*, etc., revealing the thoughts of Marian Henderson.

Austen compelled us to acknowledge, as one of her early admirers declared, that "as an artist she surpassed all the male novelists that ever lived." In fact, she entered the highest ranks of the profession without fuss or protest, and bade us bow to woman's wit.

She could not supply "villain" parts from her own sex. But Lady Susan remained the model of the type, for its manly exponents.[1]

This is the end of Jane's apprenticeship as novelist, which includes all work written at Steventon that we can confidently judge on written evidence, of which alone we have the actual record *as* then recorded. The novels begun, completed in their original form, and partially revised before she left the rectory, received their author's final imprimatur during the period of her full maturity, and sound criticism will be best served by considering the whole output in one sequence.

Meanwhile, at a slight sacrifice of chronological accuracy, it is better to consider briefly the work done in Bath, before resuming the records of biography. Nothing can be more natural, or in more obvious accord with all we know of Jane's theory and practice, than her determination to revise and attempt to publish *Northanger Abbey* (that is *Catherine*), soon after settling in Bath. She afterwards always worked on the spot, by confining her scenes and subjects to those of her own home district; and though she had not projected *Catherine* without considerable personal knowledge of the pump room, the "Sunday crowd of fashionables," and the balls or concerts on each alternate evening she could now test and enlarge that knowledge as an actual resident. The historian of Bath asks his readers, with serious misgiving, "Is there, or is there not, any *other* large

[1] Miss Mary Augusta Austen-Leigh relates in outline a sad true tale from the experience of one of Jane Austen's friends, in which, she believes, Jane found the character and events of *Lady Susan*.

town where young women indiscriminately run either alone or in groups from one end to the other without any servant or steady friend to accompany them, talking and laughing at the corners of the streets, and walking sometimes with young men only?" Isabella Thorpe, we may be sure, took advantage, if Jane did not, of such delightful free-and-easiness, hoping no doubt to be invited by some smart beau to sit beside him in one of the "numerous dashing equipages passing and repassing" before her sparkling eyes.

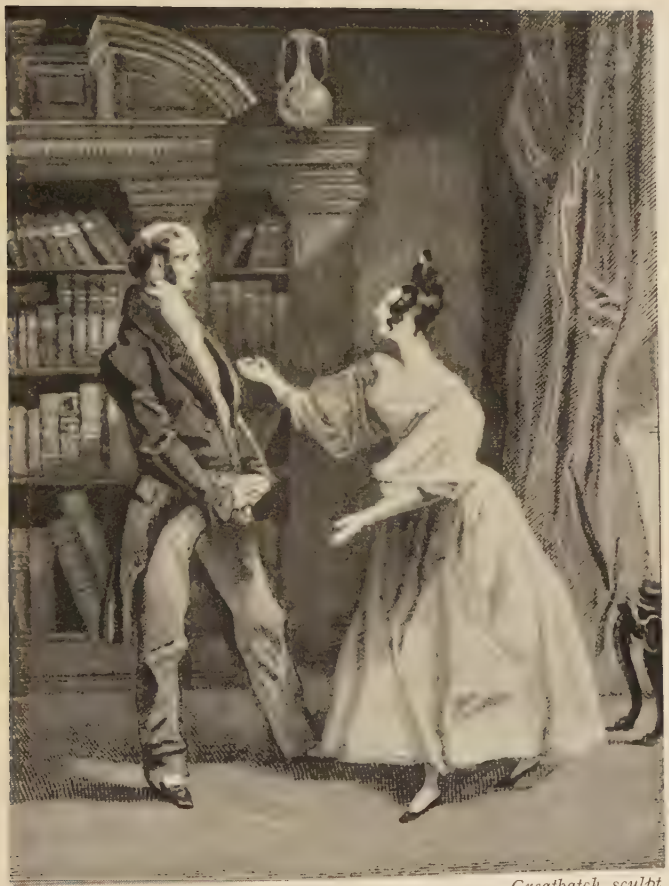
My own strong belief about *The Watsons* would place it as first draft for *Emma*, as definitely and certainly as *Elinor and Marianne* grew into *Sense and Sensibility* and *First Impressions* became *Pride and Prejudice.*

The air of Highbury can be seen plainly stirring in *The Watsons.* The first Emma's father would have his "basin of gruel" for supper, when "the clock struck nine." Though more intellectual and unsympathetic his selfish invalidism also regulates the home life and determines much of the plot. She is an admirable daughter, always ready to give him "the gentleness and silence" he demanded when ill, or to "make up" a card-table when he was more socially inclined. Mrs. Robert Watson, in her own person another Fanny Dashwood, is later seen as understudy to Mrs. Elton, with her "my good creature, use no ceremony with me, I entreat you," her vulgar prattle about the "select parties at Croydon" and the "seven tables" in her "drawing-room" *and* her "dear Mr. W."

There is a little of the genial Weston in the "communicative" Mr. Edwards, "fresh from the street and ready to tell whatever might interest," because "he had lived long enough in the idleness of a town to become a little of a gossip"; while Robert Watson, like the Brothers Knightley, must "understand the last current report as to public news . . . before he could let his attention be yielded to the

less rational and important demands of the women." As dependent on others and official "companions," the Misses Watson are "distributed" as it were, in social position, between poor Miss Taylor and Jane Fairfax. Frank Churchill may be a very much refined new edition of Tom Musgrove, for he too lives in Great Houses, and has retained a touch of the snob. Elizabeth Watson, like Emma Woodhouse, "would rather do anything than teach in a school"; and her "contention" that "it is very bad to grow old and be poor and laughed at" is the undoubted text for a well-known passage in the later volume. Lady Osborne, possibly for fear of sailing too near the de Burgh, has vanished; and Emma's respect for Mr. Howard is hardly enough to suggest Knightley, though both were somewhat parental towards the heroine, and both hesitated before the proposal, fearful her heart was attached elsewhere.

In themselves certain such parallels in characterizations and events do not *prove* the case; as we have no evidence in detail—for comparison—of the changes wrought upon *Elinor and Marianne*, except that they must have been considerable and extensive. My theory, however, depends far more upon the known record of Jane Austen's life and work than on any observed or imagined instances of resemblance. When *The Watsons* was written she had already completed three novels, and acquired the habit of taking up a new story immediately the old was finished. Though she was continually revising her work with infinite patience and regard for detail, there is no instance of her abandoning a scheme or group of characters once she had passed the stage of experiment, as she had in *The Watsons*. When settled at Chawton she took up the two completed Steventon MSS. for final revision; was directed to *Mansfield Park*, the only story beginning in the schoolroom, by the happy company of young people, nephews, nieces, and their friends, whom



Pickering, pinxt. *Greatbatch, sculpt.*

FRONTISPIECE TO "PRIDE AND PREJUDICE," 1833

She then told him what Mr. Darcy had voluntarily done for Lydia. He heard her with much astonishment.

Edward always collected about him. *Catherine* had not yet been recovered from Crossby. The new atmosphere having thus worked its spell she recalled, according to custom, the unused manuscript, freely remodelled its original plan, and created the charming circle of Highbury. *The Watsons* itself had been set aside at the time by the force of circumstances; and there is no reason whatever to suppose that it displeased its author or was deliberately abandoned or rejected by her any more than was *First Impressions*. We need not assume that her considered critical judgment was unfavourable. There is no mystery to explain. *The Watsons* is "placed" with the other early versions. The diary of work is consistently completed.

This view, if accepted, should not prevent our enjoying *The Watsons* itself. We have only to imagine the eagerness with which we should open *Elinor and Marianne* or *First Impressions* were they ever discovered and set up in print; to recall how we have enjoyed the "cancelled" chapters of *Persuasion*. Nor does it detract from later continuations of the story, especially the latest, carefully worked out from Jane's original plan. The existence of such a plan only proves that here, as always, the plot was worked out before any writing began; and the keen interest taken by Cassandra in every detail of Jane's work would retain in memory the manuscript and the intended continuation.

Conjecture will always busy itself about *The Watsons*, for many reasons. We do not know, positively, at what stage of Jane Austen's career it was written, why she abandoned it and yet preserved the manuscript. As to what she intended doing with the characters we have only a note supplied by Mrs. Hubback to the author of the *Memoir* of what she had been told by Cassandra:

"Mr. Watson was soon to die; and Emma to become

dependent for a home upon her narrow-minded sister-in-law and brother. She was to decline an offer of marriage from Lord Osborne, and much of the interest of the tale was to arise from Lady Osborne's love for Mr. Howard, and his counter-affection for Emma, whom he was finally to marry."

In his reprint of this fragment from the original manuscript (Clarendon Press, 1927) Mr. R. W. Chapman has a footnote on the words "Lady Osborne's love": "Doubtless a slip for Miss Osborne. Lady Osborne was nearly fifty." I confess I see no reason whatever for this correction. Mr. Howard was "a little more than thirty" and, had he been younger, Jane Austen must have seen many cases of elderly great ladies indulging in tender feelings for the curate, as they do to-day for the "dancing-partner"; and Jane Austen never gives any one a title without exposing their absurdities for our delight. Mrs. Hubback followed her own statement in *The Younger Sister*, and there are two passages in Jane's own manuscript which supply a hint of the situation.

"At the end of the dances" Mr. Howard is found at "Lady Osborne's casino table," close to which Emma's party was "for a few moments hemmed in"; and "she, on perceiving herself the object of attention" both to Lady Osborne and him, had just turned away her eyes in time to avoid seeming to hear his nephew Charles "exclaim delightedly aloud, 'Oh, uncle! do look at my partner, she is so pretty!'" Could words more plainly suggest the awakening of Lady Osborne's jealousy of a rival? A little later, when Miss Watson first learns that Emma thinks Mr. Howard agreeable, she exclaims: "Howard! dear me; I cannot think of him but as playing cards with Lady Osborne." The two, in fact, are coupled from the first. Whereas Miss Osborne had, in reality, a far stronger sense than her mother

of social superiority though she could be kind with condescension.

Mrs. Brown tells me, indeed, that she believes (I presume from inherited tradition) that the incident of Emma being snowed up at Mrs. Blake's, with the obliging consequences—recalling Jane Bennet's convenient detention at Netherfield, is a "genuine Jane incident." Mrs. Hubback uses it in *The Younger Sister*, and it is believed that there she maintained her memory of Cassandra's information[1] through most of volume i, used Jane Austen incidents in volume ii, and went off (in part at her publisher's suggestions) along other lines in volume iii.

The only extant manuscripts by Jane Austen were some of the early fragments, probably preserved from some kind of sentiment: the cancelled chapters of *Persuasion* and *Sanditon*, obviously because she was not in a state of health to decide anything about them; *Lady Susan* and *The Watsons*, both belonging to the unsettled period of her life. There can be little doubt that these last two were preserved because Jane had *not*, in any final sense, rejected them; though apparently she never attempted to publish the one (which was too short for any method of issue then practised), and never continued the second, though using a great deal of it in *Emma* for a plot considerably changed. We do not *know*, however, whether there are greater differences than between *Elinor and Marianne* and *Sense and Sensibility*, or between *First Impressions* and *Pride and Prejudice*. Better reasons for complete rejection of the *plot* can be found if we accept Mrs. Brown's conclusion that it was written in 1807, than if the more usual date of 1804 be correct. The opening sentence alludes to a "winter assembly," to be held on "Tuesday, October 13th," and that date fell on a Tuesday

[1] All was derived from Cassandra, as Jane died before Mrs. Hubback was born.

in 1807.[1] Mr. Chapman's careful "chronologies" of the novels prove how accurate Jane usually was in such matters. The watermark on the paper used is mostly dated 1803 and 1804, but this proves no more than that it could not have been written *before* 1804. There are many reasons for paper not reaching a private individual until years after its manufacture. Now, after Mr. Watson's death, his daughters were to go and live with their brother Robert and his unpleasant wife. Jane Austen's father died in 1805, after the watermark date, but before 1807, by which time it was practically settled that Cassandra and Jane would be living with *their* brother and his wife who were married May 1806. She could not wish to perpetuate any association between the intolerable Mrs. Robert Watson and Frank's wife.

When, therefore, in 1814 she again took up Emma, with her readiness to live as an old maid if reasonably well off, her ignorance of the misery endured by school-teachers; her greater refinement and quicker brain than her sisters and intimate girl friends; her somewhat mature and instructive lover; and, above all, her gentlemanly, invalid father: with Mrs. Robert elaborated in Augusta Elton, and Tom Musgrave more adept at flirtation as Frank Churchill; she had to invent an entirely new plot. For news of that fine snob, Tom Musgrave, thus summarily abandoned, we must turn, as Mrs. Brown suggests, to the sprightly "Letter the Fifth. From a young lady very much in love to her Friend" in the "clever collection of curious" letters, carefully culled and classed by the "comical cousin" of

[1] Mrs. Brown tells me of further conjectural evidence for the later date, in a letter of 1808, where Jane describes meeting two young women at a ball: "How pleasant it was to find that one of them was called Emma." This is, of course, too early for reference to the novel of that name; but it is characteristic of Jane to be pleased with meeting the name of the heroine with whom she had been so recently engaged.

Croydon now than he did last March. — He will never marry unless he can marry somebody very great, but if Osborne perhaps or something in that state. — "You are acquainted with Tom Musgrave, Elizabeth, just one very little inclination for his acquaintance." "You are afraid of him I do not wonder at you." — "No indeed — I dislike & despise him." — "Dislike & despise Tom Musgrave! No, that you never can. I defy you not to be delighted with him if he takes notice of you. I hope he will dance with you — I dare say he will, unless the Osbornes come with a large party, & then he will not speak to any body else." — "He seems to have most engaging manners" said Emma. "I'll see how irresistable Mr. Tom Musgrave find each other. — I suppose I shall know him as soon as I enter the Ball-room; he must carry some of his charms in his face." — "You will not find him in the Ball-room I can tell you

PAGE FROM MS. OF "THE WATSONS"

Miss Cooper (*Love and Freindship*, pp. 117–26). It is, as Henrietta there exclaims, "no disgrace to love a handsome man," and Tom's "pattern love letter" is, indeed, a "masterpiece of writing." It was this "sweet man" who so justly "accused the laws of England for allowing uncles and aunts to possess their estates when wanted by their nephews or nieces."

If then *The Watsons* be, in a sense, the first version of *Emma*, or to whatever extent it was permanently abandoned, Jane—as usual—had the whole plot more or less worked out in her mind; and it is not surprising that more than one attempt has been made to complete it on the original lines.

The first of these, *The Younger Sister*, by Catherine (Mrs. Hubback), 1850, is a marvellous achievement of memory. Catherine was born about a year after Jane's death, married John Hubback, Barrister, in 1842, and at Cassandra's death three years later, was twenty-six. Her aunt frequently read *The Watsons* aloud to her, and talked over every detail of the written and unwritten details of the tale. Mrs. Hubback, like several of her cousins, was clearly stimulated by Jane's example, to write tales of her own. In course of time she produced quite a considerable number of novels, one on the deceased wife's sister Bill, praised and quoted by William de Morgan,[1] which were fairly well read at the time, and justly esteemed without being quite distinguished.

When it occurred to her, in 1850, to use the story of Emma Watson, the manuscript had passed into other hands; and her son, Mr. Hubback, assures me that she wrote her version, *The Younger Sister*, entirely from recollection. A comparison of parallel passages, describing the same events,

[1] *The Wife's Sister or The Forbidden Marriage*, 1851. In a note to the second edition of his *It Never Can Happen Again*.

will prove how closely she had assimilated every detail; luckily supported, as she must have been, by a most exceptionally good memory for actual words and turns of phrase. Where memory failed, however, or she was introducing ideas of her own, there is no attempt whatever to even recall, or suggest, Jane's style. By the end of chapter v in the first volume she had reached about the point where the original manuscript concludes, but she maintained the general atmosphere some time longer, until her publisher, to whom, apparently, these early chapters had been submitted, declared that the tale was hopelessly old-fashioned, and far too quiet for his readers. Thus we begin to part from Jane, and such episodes as the distressing spectacle of Emma and Miss Osborne overhearing Tom Musgrave's careless and insincere avowals to Margaret Watson, which leads up to a case for breach of promise, finally detach the work from any association with its original.

No hint was given to the public of borrowed characters or plot, but after the title-page of volume i we read:

"To the memory of her aunt, the late Jane Austen, this work is affectionately inscribed by the authoress; who, though too young to have known her personally, was from childhood taught to esteem her virtues, and admire her talents."

Before *The Watsons*, by Jane, was published in 1870, this novel probably passed unnoticed by her admirers, and by that time it had been more or less forgotten. When, in 1923, Miss Oulton was inspired by her enthusiasm for the novels to ease the discomforts of slow recovery from sickness by continuing the story, with no idea of publication, she did not know of *The Younger Sister*, and was entirely dependent upon the *Memoir* for directions, as it were, from Jane. At the time the venture was rather generally regarded as stepping in where angels fear to tread, and Miss Oulton was subjected

to far more merciless criticism than the merit of the case can justify. Her spirited reply in *The Publishers' Circular* of August 18, 1923, did something to restore the balance of justice. To my mind, the most unfortunate feature of the book is the absence of any indication where Jane's work ends and Miss Oulton's begins, which actually is, moreover, unwisely arranged in the middle of chapter vi. The continuation is brief and restrained, with clear evidence of loyalty to Jane Austen, and—if we recognize that it would be folly to expect equal genius—there is nothing to seriously interfere with our enjoyment of the tale.

Within five years, however, Mrs. Brown chanced to come upon a copy of her grandmother's forgotten story; and was moved, because she "declines to be solemn about Aunt Jane," to entertain herself by making another attempt. In this spirit we may defy the critics. We have a perfect right to our own fun, and I agree that Jane "would have said, 'I am pleased with your notion'"; for who have so much right to amuse themselves as the lucky folk of true Austen blood? All the same, Mrs. Brown has an attractive style of her own, an artistic conscience, a pretty wit, and *something* in her that brings us rather near to Jane. Her aim in this work, as I had suspected, she tells me was quite definite and precise—to weave the legacy of Jane's intentions into a merry tale, and—so far as was humanly possible—add nothing that was not an "authorized" version. One critic, at least, in the *Times Literary Supplement* (May 17, 1928) quite unreasonably complains that "she has done too little" in the way of invention, and "cannot be convincing because she has compressed too much for the space." She felt all the time, of course, no less strongly than her critic how infinitely much more Jane Austen *would* have made of the work, had she finished and perfected it in her own inimitable manner. But discipline must be maintained. Mrs. Brown has the

personal knowledge and understanding, by right of kinship, which enabled her to do for *The Watsons* what no one outside the family could perform. Using both the original fragment and *The Younger Sister* with discretion; wisely not attempting to capture Jane's style, she made a small permanent addition to our impressions of the genius of the family.

CHAPTER VI

THE END OF STEVENTON

They must have been happy and busy days for Jane when youth was opening to her at Steventon. For she was entering into a world that never was on land or sea; yet more real to her, almost, and certainly more real to us, than the creatures of flesh and blood—save only the very dearest—who made up her daily life. Drawing a little within herself, as she could not fail to do, she was taking mankind into her confidence; for from the first when as yet her wings were untried; and always, despite discouragement that would have broken a less resolute and less sunny nature, I am convinced that she knew we should one day meet the children of her imagination, eager to hear every word she could tell us of them.

The evidence is overwhelming and indisputable that she never allowed her "work"—and what had been play at first was very seriously work now—to interfere with social courtesies, or any duties of domesticity. It was not in her to silence or disregard any the smallest pleasure or distress that might ask her attention within the circle of her dear friends. We are told of the little slips of paper on which she wrote, so small that they could be quickly covered with a blotter or slipped into the little desk in the family sitting-room. Yet she wrote, in confidence to Cassandra: "No, indeed, I am never too busy to think of *Sense and Sensibility*. I can no more forget it than a mother can forget her sucking child."

Only in the little room upstairs, that was particularly the

sisters' own, I have no doubt that Cassandra knew how to be still and quiet, while busying herself with her pencil, that Jane might secure an uninterrupted hour to get on with the tale. If, indeed, she drew her sister's portrait while Jane was at her desk, the pose must have been arranged before or after, since she could not have obtained a full face while the sitter was busy with her pen. But we know how Emma Woodhouse, so happy at catching a likeness, often contrived to deal with similar difficulties of technique.

It was in that "sitting-room upstairs," described by Anna Austen, afterwards Mrs. Lefroy,—"the dressing-room as they were pleased to call it, perhaps because it opened into a smaller chamber, in which my two aunts slept,"—that the little Anna, who came to the rectory after her mother's death, had the inestimable privilege of hearing *First Impressions* read aloud to Cassandra by Jane. "Though not more than four or five, she was a very intelligent quick-witted child, and caught up the names of the characters, and talked about them so much downstairs, that her aunts feared she would provoke inquiry, for the story was still a secret from the elders."

As serious authorship began for Jane when she was twenty, and it was five years later, at the turn of the century, that Steventon was given up, accident has provided a certain convenience in enabling us to catch the significance of particular dates. And during this period, or shortly before it, the home circle at the rectory already described had been largely scattered; though not, by that means, in any way less intimately united by frequent meetings at Steventon and one or other of the junior homes, or by continual correspondence.

Jane's three elder brothers were now all married; James for the second time to their great friend, Mary Lloyd, and his first wife's death had brought the motherless little Anna to be comforted and cared for by her aunt. Edward was

already with the Knights; Frank and Charles, having taken up a profession, which has always given responsibilities, though under older and wiser heads, to mere boys, were already well settled into their careers; though the rector's pupils must always have provided some kind of "man about the house."

But most certainly the deepest personal emotion and upheaval of this period came from Cassandra's engagement and the tragically swift end to her romance. In accordance with what her novels prove Jane to have considered the best chance of happiness, Cassandra had chosen a man whom she had first known, six years before their engagement, as a pupil of her father, actually living in the house. And as his brother had married an aunt of Mary and Martha Lloyd, we may feel tolerably certain that intimacy had gradually grown to love. Lord Craven, a relative of theirs—and his—had given him his first—and last, promotion as his own chaplain in the West Indies, a kindness unintentionally ironical, as he himself admitted that had he known the young man was engaged he would never have invited him to that unhealthy climate. To lose thus a future of such great promise, after scarcely more than two years' recognition of its approach, cast its shadow, as we know, upon Cassandra to the end of her life, and we can scarcely be mistaken in imagining that we find its echo in the pages of *Persuasion*. Its first effect on Jane must have been profound indeed; but since neither of them would allow, had they been tempted, a sorrow they could not prevent or even mitigate, to spoil their lives, still less the lives of others dear to them; there is no reason whatever to suppose that Cassandra herself, while evidently not thinking of a second attachment, ever developed into a wet blanket or evinced any of the sourness carelessly attributed to spinsters. Like Emma she was "not a poor old maid: it is poverty only which makes

celibacy contemptible to a generous public." Jane herself remained the "life of the party" to the end; the brightest of loving aunts, round whom the numerous children of her brothers and their various wives delighted to crowd.

It was, however, the shock of those first days, after the news from the West Indies, that accounts for the fact which under other circumstances would have been so unlike Jane Austen, that on hearing of the decision to leave Steventon "she fainted away." It is true, indeed, that as she had only just returned from a visit, she happened to hear the news without a word of preparation; and Mrs. Austen, with that air of "no nonsense about it," that was characteristic of everything she ever did, was not a little abrupt in her casual announcement: "Well, girls, it is all settled. We have decided to leave Steventon and go to Bath." The decision itself appears to have been quite sudden, and we do not know why the change was made, though probably both the rector and his wife were beginning to feel the effects of having cared for a large family, now to a great extent off their hands. James, no doubt, a second time married, and this time to a penniless bride partly supported by the generosity of his first wife's people, was not unwilling to take his father's place. The rector himself saw no occasion for keeping on his pupils, and, without them, the house may have seemed rather large after the crowd to which they had grown accustomed.

There has always been an impression that the reverend gentleman had something of Mr. Bennet in his composition, though much more alive to his responsibilities as a parent: and I rather suspect he liked making up his mind without dropping a hint to any one of his intentions, enjoying his family's surprise as the decision was sprung upon them.

Undoubtedly Jane herself, who had that naturally strong attachment to the old familiar places so graphically

attributed to Elinor and Marianne, and Anne Elliot, was deeply disturbed at the thought of change. Like Anne again, she did not welcome the noise of Bath, being so great a lover of the country that she once, half seriously, asserted her conviction, that beautiful scenery "must form one of the delights of heaven." Vain regret, or the most remote hint that her wishes had been neglected; any idea of playing the martyr or refusing to enter into the family plans, would have been utterly foreign to her nature.

It was she, in fact, who went forward with Mr. Austen to find a house for them in Bath—a task that proved more arduous than they anticipated—though she could soon cheerfully report to Cassandra that they were in "two very nice-sized rooms, with dirty quilts, and everything comfortable." She had, indeed, known pretty well what to expect, for she had visited the place more than once before; though in all probability the detailed realism of its streets and "prospects" in *Northanger Abbey* (fuller than in *Persuasion*) was the result of revision on the spot at this time. Bath is mentioned with derision in *Love and Freindship*, and we cannot resist suspecting that, like Anne Elliot, she persisted in a very determined, though very silent, disinclination for the town. "She disliked Bath, and did not think it agreed with her—and Bath was to be her home." But a little later, when it had been settled what pictures, beds, and other household goods were to be taken on to the new home: "I flatter myself that for little comforts of all kinds our apartment will be one of the most complete things of the sort all over Bath, Bristol included."

It is at the closing of the Steventon days that the *Letters* of Jane Austen, as we have them, begin. Though Cassandra destroyed the most intimate and though only very few of them were written except in the short periods when the sisters were apart, on a short visit, they provide

us with closer insight than we can elsewhere obtain into Jane's daily life and — to a limited extent — into her thoughts and feelings. They have not the sparkle of the novels, save in an occasional phrase, and make less attractive reading than those of many a less delightful author; but, as familiarity grows with going back to them for information or evidence of some characteristic expression, we shall, I think, learn to attach greater value to them than a first continuous reading would suggest, particularly if those are added to the original series, which Mr. Hubback included in the *Sailor Brothers*, and those which were afterwards printed in the *Life and Letters*.

On two occasions she herself satirically describes their characteristics in terms which, as usual, are apt and full of sound thought.

"I have now attained the true art of letter-writing which we are always told is to express on paper exactly what one would say to the same person by word of mouth. I have been talking to you almost as fast as I could the whole of this letter"; and again: "Expect a most agreeable letter, for not being overburdened with subject (having nothing at all to say), I shall have no check to my genius from beginning to end."

The comparative lack of form or polish, in fact, proves two things. In the first place, towards her own people she was entirely led by affection and the desire to maintain the same intimacy with her correspondent as when they were together, to make her see and feel all those trivial details and inconsequent ideas that would pass between them with a look, a gesture, or a touch of the hand. When, as sometimes, she apologizes for writing so often we know, as *she* knew, that no apology was meant or desired. She will not permit, in so far as she can prevent it, the break of an hour in their sharing of all that life can give.

On the other hand it is impossible not to see in these letters a proof beyond all question that her style, as we know and admire it, was not literally spontaneous, but very carefully prepared. This should not, however, be taken to mean that it was affected or unnatural. Here often she hits on a phrase as neat and finished as anything in the novels; and here, of course, it was not the result of study or even of design. The apparent contradiction, though still difficult to explain precisely, may be partially detected by a fact which again is undeniable, that the style of *Love and Freindship*, and of almost everything imaginary, however slight and irresponsible, and though written only to amuse herself or only for family consumption, is yet far more "professional" than the letters, more frequently revealing wit, and almost throughout framed with art.

I suspect the truth to be that she was an artist by instinct no less than by study and intention; so that, immediately her imagination took command her love of form in phrasing was on the alert; words were chosen, however quickly; sentences were composed, with whatever ease: the study involved in revision, the careful polishing of deliberate selection, comparison, and self-criticism, being a later and more conscious act, reserved for work intended for publication. What wit we find in the letters is given only to invention, something Cassandra would know at once did not express what really happened or what her sister really thought. On such occasions, too, she is often cynical, and hard and cold, as in *Love and Freindship*, and no less contrary to her real attitude towards life. Things are said impossible for her to have written had there been the slightest risk of Cassandra not recognizing in them the novelist replacing the sister.

It was the author of *Northanger Abbey*, not Jane Austen,

who found Mrs. Stent "always in the way, unequal to anything, and unwelcome to everybody"; and Mrs. Blount "looking exactly as she did in September, with the same broad face, diamond bandeau, white shoes, pink husband, and fat neck." It was not Jane herself who noticed that "Mrs. B. was obliged to leave her party to run round the room after her drunken husband"; or guessed that Mrs. Hall was "brought to bed of a dead child some weeks before she was expected because she happened unawares to look at her husband." *She* did not believe that "Mrs. Children's two sons" were "to have one wife between them, a Miss Holwell, who belongs to the Black Hole of Calcutta"; as she certainly never intended to engage "a steady cook, and a young giddy housemaid, with a sedate middle-aged man, who is to undertake the double duty of husband to the former and sweetheart to the latter. No children, of course, to be allowed on either side."

There is an echo again of the novelist, though more kindly phrased, in her surprise at Cassandra "dancing four dances with so stupid a man. Why not rather dance two of them with some elegant brother officer who was struck with your appearance as soon as you entered the room?"

We find Jane Austen herself eager to note and share the interests and feelings of all around her; in her excitement over every item of news from her sailor brothers, and her scarcely less eager desire that they should enjoy and excel in the dance; in her minute chronicle of everything said and done by her little nephews and nieces; all the items of shopping, dressing, calling or walking, and, above all, of her partners at every ball. As she truly says: "I do not think it worth while to wait for enjoyment till there is some real opportunity for it," and the power of making happiness out of nothing was far from the least of her gifts. And by talking nonsense she gave as much pleasure as she received.

There is gallantry, if not heroism, in the enumeration of consolations for a "sad complaint in the eye":

"I shall be such a proficient in music by the time I have got rid of my cold that I shall be perfectly qualified in *that* science at least to take Mr. Roope's office at Eastwell next summer; of my talent in drawing I have given specimens in my letters to you, and I have nothing to do but invent a few hard names for the stars." Why has not someone preserved for us the letters with "specimens of her drawings"?

There is one reference, and one only, to Cassandra's engagement which, in the light of subsequent events, gains pathos by its very simplicity: "I am glad to find that Mr. and Mrs. Fowle are pleased with you. I hope you will continue to give satisfaction."

That there was romance in Jane's own life, also frustrated, though in what way is not known, we can scarcely doubt; but the slight and somewhat contradictory evidence precludes us from any clear deductions about the facts themselves, how deeply the experience was felt, and what permanent effects, if any, it had upon her life and work. Though often assumed to account for the alleged interval (which I have shown to be almost non-existent) between the two periods of her literary activity, and for Anne Elliot's eloquent words upon the fidelity of women "when existence or when hope is lost"; there is no sure ground for imagining any such connection and other explanations are obvious and sufficient.

So far as anything in the published *Letters* is concerned we have no clue whatever. Her allusions to "profligate and shocking" flirtations with Tom Lefroy, and to their last meeting, are so manifestly frivolous and exaggerated, that there was certainly nothing serious here. He married soon after these letters were written; and though in later years he declared that "he had been in love with

HIGH SCHOOL

Jane Austen, but it was a boy's love"; this may mean even on his side no more than the vanity of an old man, naturally tempted to exaggerate his intimacy with a great writer. There was a Mr. Blackall, credited with being an admirer, whom she describes as "a piece of perfection, noisy perfection, which I always recollect with regard"; and she tells Cassandra that a certain gentleman's partiality "will decline away in a very reasonable manner. . . . It is most probable that our indifference will soon become mutual, unless his regard, which appeared to spring from knowing nothing of me at first, is best supported by never seeing me." To confidences like these we can only echo Jane Bennet's entreaty to Elizabeth on a similar subject, to "be serious."

Our only direct information is supplied by Caroline Austen, and she speaks on the unimpeachable authority of Cassandra. Her aunt, she writes, was staying with them at Newtown, and seemed "very much struck with" a gentleman whose acquaintance they then made.

> Afterwards she spoke of him as one so unusually gifted with all that was agreeable, and said that he reminded her strongly of a gentleman whom they had met one summer when they were by the sea—I think she said in Devonshire; that he seemed greatly attracted by my Aunt Jane—I suppose it was an intercourse of some weeks—and that when they had to part, he was urgent to know where they would be the next summer, implying, or perhaps saying, that he would be there also, wherever it might be. I can only say that the impression left on Aunt Cassandra was that he had fallen in love with her sister, and was quite in earnest. Soon afterwards they heard of his death. I am sure she thought he was worthy of her sister, from the way in which she recalled his memory, and also that she did not doubt, either, that he would have been a successful suitor.

Miss F. C. Lefroy, James's granddaughter, refers this narrative to Mr. Blackall, but Caroline expressly called it "nameless and dateless," so that the connection is unauthorized, and probably incorrect, though her comments,

quoted by Miss Hill, from her unprinted reminiscences of the family, are sympathetic and understanding.

There is an authentic but rather surprising story, also related by Caroline Austen, of a different person and place. This happened in 1802, probably after what has just been told. When Jane and Cassandra were on a visit to their brother James, then rector at Steventon, in October, they went on November 25 [1] to stay for a few days at Manydown Park, returning on Friday, December 3. Within a few hours of entering the house, however, they suddenly announced that they must go back at once and, as ladies could not then travel unattended by a gentleman, James would have to take them. Saturday is, naturally, an awkward day for a rector, without a curate, to take a journey that would keep him away over the week-end; but the necessity was evidently so urgent that his sisters forgot, or ignored, any consideration for his convenience, a neglect utterly foreign to the nature of either, which for some time remained unexplained. After a time, however, the family were told that Mr. Bigg-Wither had proposed to Jane and been accepted; but that she, almost immediately, changed her mind, and having thus finally dismissed him, must at once put the miles between herself and a possibly pursuing lover, and gain the peaceful quiet of home. He might have felt that her rejection had been scarcely more considered than her first acceptance; whereas she was now perfectly sure of her own mind.

"I conjecture," writes Caroline, "that the advantages he could offer, and her gratitude for his love, and her long friendship with his family, induced my aunt to decide that she would marry him when he should ask her, but that having accepted him she was miserable." He had, in fact,

[1] Mr. R. A. Austen-Leigh kindly gave me these corrections of the dates given n the *Life and Letters*, p. 92.

everything to recommend him, except the power to win her love.

It was surely some recollection of this experience in Jane Austen's mind which stimulated the advice she gave, with its superficial contradictions, to her niece Fanny Knight, twelve years after these events, on a similar problem:

> Upon the whole, what is to be done? His situation in life, family, friends, and above all his character, his uncommonly amiable mind, strict principles, just notions, good habits, *all* that you know so well how to value, *all* that is really of the first importance—everything of this nature pleads his cause most strongly. He is the eldest son of a man of fortune, the near relation of your particular friend, and belonging to your own country. [But, only a paragraph later.] I shall turn round and entreat you not to commit yourself further, and not to think of accepting him unless you really do like him. Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without affection. [And in another twelve days.] Nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound *without love.*

Her action in youth and her advice in maturity are in absolute accord. We may dismiss, without a moment's hesitation, the legend—started by Sir Walter Scott—that her view of marriage was either mercenary or matter-of-fact.

There was a story in the *Reminiscences of Sir Francis H. Doyle* which a Miss Ursula Mayow is *said* to have heard, thirty or forty years before repeating it, from a niece of Miss Austen, that Jane met and loved a "naval officer" in Switzerland, who shortly after died of brain-fever. But it is practically certain that neither Jane nor any of the family were ever in Switzerland, and the narrator is merely attaching a confused version of the true story to imaginary persons and places.

It has been said, quite perversely, that in "Jane Austen's philosophy love prevails over prudence, family feeling, social conditions, worldly propriety. When love comes in at the door all other considerations fly out of the window. To her mind the call of love, which comes to few, ought not to be resisted, cannot be resisted, when it comes." Now, in

the first place, all her characters fall in love, and while feeling deeply no one of them, with the possible exception of Marianne Dashwood, is overwhelmed by emotion. Moreover, though goodness in her view is not enough without love, and she does not advocate marrying the most excellent of men *because* of his virtue, it is no less absolutely clear that, while one may be attracted by persons without principles, the partiality must be resisted. Willoughby, Mr. Elliot, and Henry Crawford are all rejected for no other reason, and Mary Crawford did not herself offend by actual impropriety of conduct. She "did not *think* justly" of her brother's sin. "Oh! Fanny, it was the detection, not the offence, which she reprobated. So voluntarily, so freely, so coolly to canvass it! No reluctance, no horror, no feminine —shall I say? no modest loathings! a blunted delicacy, a perversion of mind." Jane Austen's heroines are not even permitted to marry "out of their class." "Mr. Darcy is a gentleman," said Elizabeth, "I am a gentleman's daughter."

Yet it is the personality of the lovers, their individual characters and mutual love, *not* their relatives or connections, which determine the issue. The unity of her own family was so complete that she never hesitated to produce laughter or distress by incompatibility of refinement within the home. Darcy is not the perfect lover till he has learned to bear the "obsequious civility" of his lady's cousin "with admirable calmness," and to converse with her own family "without mortification." Lydia's lack of principle cast no slur in *his* mind upon Jane or Elizabeth; and, to take an example from real life from her letters, it evidently did not surprise or disturb her that the manners of Lord Craven, cousin and patron of her sister's fiancé, Thomas Fowle, should be "found very pleasing indeed. The little flaw of having a mistress now living with him at Ashdown Park

seems to be the only unpleasing circumstance about him." William Price, we know, did not reject promotion from the wicked Admiral Crawford.

It was certain that Jane Austen regarded marriage as at once the natural, and ideal, consummation of life; but *not* so essential to happiness as to justify disregard of principles and morality, of prudence or compatibility. There were girls like Harriet Smith who must marry somebody, and there could be no doubt of her happiness with any good-tempered husband; but neither such an one nor husband-hunters like Lydia and Nancy Steele could ever command her respect. "Without love," said Emma, "I am sure I should be a fool to change such a situation as mine."

There was, in fact, a strong element of common sense in her conception of romance, however highly she esteemed it as an ideal. The ideal is always based on the development of understanding by continuous intimacy over a period of years. Every plot, of course, depends on delay before the wedding bells; but Jane Austen never twists reality in the service of drama. She very plainly believes that Elizabeth, Emma, and Anne loved, and were loved, more truly for the knowledge gained of their husbands by getting to know them in prolonged and intimate friendship; that Edmund was far happier and more likely to make Fanny happy than if he had realized "all she meant to him" from the first; that Marianne's gradual "conviction of Colonel Brandon's fond attachment, with a knowledge so intimate of his goodness," was a far better thing than her impetuous infatuation for Willoughby. Mr. Bennet knew very well that his second daughter was an unusually intelligent woman: "let me not have the grief of seeing *you* unable to respect your partner in life. . . . I know your disposition, Lizzy, I know that you could be neither happy nor respectable unless you truly esteemed your husband."

For which reasons I am strongly disposed to believe that Jane Austen herself was not, in any permanent or profound degree, depressed or altered by the breaking off of her romance. Not because she was likely to have been mistaken or judged in haste. Cassandra's approval forbids any such idea. But hers was a nature to feel most deeply towards the dear, familiar things. Though probably quick to respond, and yet so balanced as to choose well even at sight, and unlikely to be stirred by any false or temporary graces of mind or heart; she would never have given herself away in a few weeks, never have learned in so short a time all she felt it necessary to know for lasting confidence and trust. No doubt much was hoped, disappointment was acute, for a while; it may well have been always a cause of regret when recalled. But no more than one of the "might-have-beens," such as have touched and passed by most of us at some period of our lives; never enough grown or tested for us to measure our loss, to judge of the happiness it might have brought. "There *are* such beings," she once wrote to her favourite niece, "*perhaps one in a thousand*, as the creature you and I should think perfection, where grace and spirit are united to worth, where the manners are equal to the heart and understanding; but such a person may not come in our way." For her, assuredly, he did not. Had there been occasion, no doubt her will would have proved strong enough to conquer a deeper wound in the heart, as her unselfishness would have forbidden her distressing others by complaint, and her genial nature would have much assisted the cure.

But as things were no such effort was required, as I believe; and she had more than the usual means at hand to fill her life and save her from becoming either narrow or bitter. The testimony of the family is universal and uncompromising of her peculiar charm for nephews and nieces. It is no

disparagement to Cassandra that Jane is spoken of as "a favourite aunt."

The *Memoir* offers testimony from two of her nieces:

> As a very little girl I was always creeping up to Aunt Jane, and following her whenever I could, in the house and out of it. I might not have remembered this but for the recollection of my mother telling me privately, that I must not be troublesome to my aunt. Her first charm to children was great sweetness of manner. She seemed to love you, and you loved her in return. This, as well as I can now recollect, was what I felt in my early days, before I was old enough to be amused by her cleverness. But soon came the delight of her playful talk. She could make everything amusing to a child. Then, as I got older, when cousins came to share in the entertainment, she would tell us the most delightful stories, chiefly of fairyland, and her fairies had all characters of their own. The tale was invented, I am sure, at the moment, and was continued two or three days, if occasion served.
>
> When staying at Chawton, if my two cousins were there, we often had amusements in which my aunt was very helpful. She was the one to whom we always looked for help. She would furnish us with what we wanted from her wardrobe; and she would be the entertaining visitor in our make-believe house. She amused us in various ways. Once, I remember, in giving a conversation as between myself and my two cousins, supposed to be grown up, the day after a ball.

It was, probably, one of these cousins who writes:

> Aunt Jane was the general favourite with children; her ways with them being so playful, and her long circumstantial stories so delightful. These were continued from time to time, and were begged for on all possible, and impossible occasions; woven, as she proceeded, out of nothing but her own happy talent for invention. Ah! if but one of them could be recovered! And again, as I grew older, when the original seventeen years between our ages seemed to shrink to seven, or to nothing, it comes back to me now how strangely I missed her. It had become so much a habit with me, to put by things in my mind with a reference to her, and to say to myself, I shall keep this for Aunt Jane.

Elsewhere we read: "None of us could throw spillikins in so perfect a circle, or take them off with so steady a hand. Her performances with the cup-and-ball were marvellous.

She has been known to catch the ball on the point above a hundred times in succession." There are letters to Fanny Knight on her love-affairs, to Anna Austen on her attempts at novel-writing, and to the younger Caroline on her tale of Olivia and the good-for-nothing father: "I hope *he* hung himself, or took the surname of *Bone*, or underwent some direful penance or other." From these, with her frequent reports to Cassandra of the "young people," it is plain to see how large a part they had in her daily thoughts and occupations.

And, as we know, the inner life of her imagination was already vigorous and full. There is a zest and glow in her creative work that could not have come from one out of tune with life, from one—however brave and stout-hearted—who had known and lost the best life has to offer.

CHAPTER VII

THE WANDERERS

JANE's more or less playful references to the "particulars of our sale" make us realize the complete break involved in the removal from Steventon. "We have heard the price of nothing but the cows, bacon, hay, hops, tables, and my father's chest of drawers and study-table. . . . Sixty-one guineas and a half for the three cows gives one some support under the blow of only eleven guineas for the tables. Eight for my pianoforte is about what I really expected to get."

They were even parting, it seems, with their beloved books. James was to take the rector's five hundred volumes at a venture at half a guinea a volume, and though her own were "*said* to have sold well," the results do not appear to have been satisfactory; "Mr. Bent seems *bent* upon being very disagreeable, for he values the books only at £70. The whole world is in a conspiracy to enrich one part of our family at the expense of another. Ten shillings for Dodsley's poems, however, please me to the quick, and I do not care how often I sell them for as much."

There is abundant evidence here of a family accustomed to a well-stocked library, for which the society of Bath, as Jane describes it on a first impression, offered little to compensate: "I respect Mrs. Chamberlayne for doing her hair well, but cannot feel a more tender sentiment. Miss Langly is like any other short girl, with a broad nose and wide mouth, fashionable dress and exposed bosom. Adm. Stanhope is a gentleman-like man, but then his legs are too short and his tail too long. . . There was a monstrous

deal of stupid quizzing and commonplace nonsense talked, but scarcely any wit."

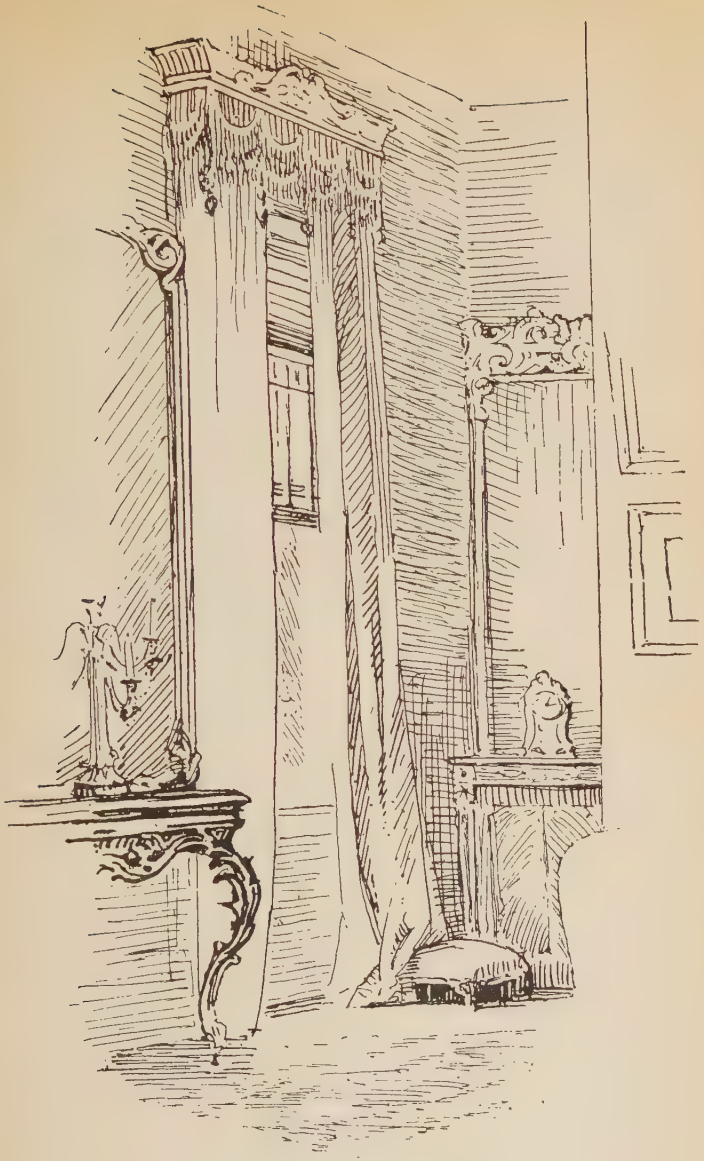
After the records of house-hunting, on which the cheerful note sounds somehow a little forced; of accompanying her uncle, Mr. Leigh Perrot, to the waters; and of "the first view of Bath in fine weather . . . all vapour, shadow, smoke, and confusion"; there is a few years' gap in the *Letters* which leaves us almost without any real knowledge of their first impressions of that resort of fashion.

Some of the party apparently made visits to Devonshire and other parts during the first year, but by the October of 1801 they were settled at 4 Sydney Place,[1] and probably stayed there until early in 1805, when Mr. Austen's growing weakness made him wish to be nearer the centre of the town, and a house was found at 27 Green Park Buildings. It was after her father's death, in the same year, that they moved into furnished lodgings at 25 Gay Street.

"Everybody has their taste in noises as well as in other matters," thought Anne Elliot; and it is tolerably clear that the noises of Bath were not peculiarly agreeable to Jane Austen; though she certainly found it a very fruitful source of entertaining copy. She could allow her characters rather more liberty *here*, than under the observant eyes of a small country town, for, as an historian of the city remarks:

> The population of the streets seems to consist of gay folks, shopkeepers, and chairmen. To what can we liken the place on a fine day? A swarm of bees unsettled—the evening flies that dance joyfully in the beams of the setting sun. Almost every individual in the numerous groups you meet seems bursting with delight; the streets resound with their voices. But when I have seen a young lady dashing down Milsome Street, her hat turned up before, her voice loud, her step quick and confident, I own I have felt a little startled. Is there, or is there not, any other large town where young women indiscriminatingly run either alone or in groups from one end to the other without any servant or steady friend to accompany them, talking and laughing at the corners of the streets, and walking sometimes with young men only?

[1] The *Memoir* says Sydney Terrace, but this was almost certainly inaccurate.



THE DRAWING-ROOM AT 4 SYDNEY PLACE, BATH

Here, indeed, was abundance of local colour, which she studied carefully and used with admirable effect. In *Northanger Abbey* Bath is made the scene of triumph and adventure, of a young girl's eager entry into the joys and perils and disappointments of life. In *Persuasion* the second-rate artificiality of its imitation splendour and petty social jealousies are exposed to punish and degrade the pompous vanity of a gentleman-baronet, too weak and selfish to maintain the real dignity and honour that was his by rights, in his own place. And even so, "among sauntering politicians, bustling house-keepers, flirting girls, nursery maids and children," Anne Elliot, because she was in love, found her "spirits dancing in private rapture. Prettier musings of high-wrought love and eternal constancy could never have passed along those streets. It was almost enough to spread purification and perfume all the way."

There is, moreover, one episode of these years to which we owe some of the brightest and most charming scenes in English literature. It was in September 1804 that Jane Austen went to stay in Lyme Regis, with its main street "almost hurrying into the water," and "the Cobb itself, with its old wonders and new improvements," still very much as Jane knew and loved it. "A very strange stranger he must be who does not find charms in Lyme to make him wish to know it better." Miss Hill informs us that the "small house near the foot of a pier of unknown date," called Bay Cottage, is firmly established by local tradition as the home of the Harvilles, and with every detail of appearance and position to justify its claim. The landlady will proudly tell you that one of her bedrooms is "the room where the poor young lady was nursed," and a cheerful room on the top story "was the children's nursery." No wonder Tennyson shouted, "Don't talk to me of Monmouth. Show me the exact spot where Louisa Musgrave fell."

Though Jane had "the little fever and indisposition which had been all the fashion that week at Lyme," and though she detected "dirt in the water-decanters, as fast as she could—to keep everything as it was under Cassandra's administration"; she clearly found the bathing and other diversions at Lyme altogether "delightful." Mrs. Austen's shoes had never been "so well blacked before"; Mr. Austen "stayed very contentedly at the ball till half-past nine"; and their man, James, had "a great many more than all the cardinal virtues," with "a laudable thirst for travelling," though, to be sure, "the quality" were "bold, queer-looking people."

The visit ended on October 25, when the *Bath Chronicle* announced the names of "Mr., Mrs., and the Miss Austens" among the day's "arrivals."

I doubt, however, whether Lyme Regis survived so affectionately in Jane Austen's memory entirely on its own merits. For her, rather, it must have long stood out in sharp contrast with the days to come. It was in December of the same year that her great friend, that remarkable woman, Mrs. Lefroy of Ashe, was killed by a fall from her horse, and in the following January "an illness of only eight and forty hours carried off" George Austen. "Within twenty-four hours of his death he was walking about with only the help of a stick—was even reading. The loss of such a parent must be felt, or we should be brutes."

That was always Jane Austen's way—to express deep feeling in some abrupt, almost rough, phrase; that startles us by its vigour, flashing a sudden light upon the reality of her beneath the smiling serenity. It is impossible for us not to suspect something of George Austen in Mr. Bennet and Mr. Woodhouse—or rather, perhaps, in the more cultured and dignified Mr. Watson. He had no part, certainly, in General Tilney, Sir Walter Elliot, or Sir Thomas

Bertram. Nor were the fathers of Elizabeth or of the Emmas, in any sense, meant as portraits. It would be absurd to suggest that George Austen was ever querulous and selfish, or indifferent to his wife and family. But I believe that, by allowing his children a liberty and independence that was unusual in those days, he became rather peculiarly their friend. We do not meet with him as assuming leadership in family council, as governor of the clan. They could tease and laugh with him, as with each other, and for that reason held him dear. And so Jane drew for us the understanding, with a laugh in it, between Elizabeth and her book-loving father, and the tender respect of the elsewhere arrogant Emma Woodhouse for that courtly old gentleman who so loved "the fashions of his youth."

Just because such men do not assert themselves they become the real centre, if not the head, of a united family, which, in a measure, disintegrates at their death. There is no longer, in the true sense, a home. For all her wit and strongmindedness, Mrs. Austen accepted the conventional view of a wife's dependence on her husband in practical affairs, and, as one of those invalids who always survive to a good old age, she was already largely dependent upon the care of Jane and Cassandra. Mrs. Lloyd, meanwhile, was dying at Ibthorp; and her daughters had strong claims on the affections of the Austens.

At first it seemed as though their troubles would be intensified by poverty, for the united incomes of Mrs. Austen and Cassandra who had inherited £1000 from Thomas Fowle, only amounted to two hundred and ten pounds. But two hundred and fifty pounds a year from her sons removed that difficulty, though whether Jane herself had any private income, we are not told.

On going one morning from Gay Street to "see Miss

Chamberlayne look hot on horseback," Jane reflects, "seven years and four months ago we went to the same riding-school to see Miss Lefroy's performance! What a different set we are moving in! But seven years, I suppose, are enough to change every pore of one's skin and every feeling of one's mind." Three years later, in July 1808, Jane reminds Cassandra: "It will be two years to-morrow since we left Bath for Clifton, with what happy feelings of escape!" It is evident that if Mrs. Austen still wished to remain in Bath for the company of her brother, Mr. Leigh Perrot, now in the midst of awkward family negotiations over the Stoneleigh estates,[1] the sisters were eager to seize on any possible opportunity for a change. They do not appear to have even found, or troubled to find, any lodgings likely to prove permanently convenient; and that kind of continual flitting from street to street in which some people are content to spend their existence, must have been peculiarly intolerable to them.

In the end, that is in July 1806, they appear to have given up Bath for a series of visits, without exactly determining where they were going to live; though, in fact, circumstances were already pointing towards the choice of Southampton which, however, was not actually determined until about January 1807. On this occasion it was Francis Austen whose personal affairs turned the scale. Death in one generation was to be jostled by wedding-bells in another; for Jane had written only five months after her father's death, "Frank is in a great hurry to be married, and I have encouraged him in it." He had been already engaged two years, having met Mary Gibson at Ramsgate, where he was

[1] In this connection Jane refers to a "vile compromise" which Mr. Leigh Perrot was induced to accept; but as he received £24,000 and an annuity, during the life of Mrs. Perrot, of £2000 for resigning his expectations, it is obvious that her words are not to be taken seriously, and were no doubt understood by Cassandra.

known as "*the* officer who knelt at church"; and had been on shore for a short leave to attend his father's funeral. As a personal friend of Nelson's, with reasonable expectations of promotion, he "could not think with any degree of patience" about the chance that led him to "lose all share in the glory of a day [the day of Trafalgar] which surpasses all that ever went before it." He had, meanwhile, however, no doubt received his share of the "three prizes" won in the victory of St. Domingo, and coming home again in the May of 1806 was able to arrange a quiet wedding in Southampton in July. There were many reasons, of affection and convenience—if not actual economy—which would attract his mother and sisters to set up house with him, for in that family daughters-in-law were never approached with suspicion or criticized out of happiness; and in bringing with them Martha Lloyd, though, of course, no such idea could have occurred to them at the moment, they were providing Frank with a second wife in the very person of one whom they had themselves designed for his first; whose sister had already been married to his elder brother and was equally loved by them all. Here they were within easy distance of Edward at Godmersham and James at Steventon, secure of some society from Frank's naval friends.

As at Bath, the Austens spent some weeks in lodgings, but were settled in Castle Square by March 1807. On February 8 we read:

> Our garden is putting in order by a man who bears a remarkably good character, has a very fine complexion, and asks something less than the first. The shrubs which border the gravel walk, he says, are only sweet-briar and roses, and the latter of an indifferent sort; we mean to get a few of the better kind therefore, and at my own particular desire he procures us some syringas. I could not do without a syringa, for the sake of Cowper's line.[1] We talk also of a laburnum.

[1] Laburnum rich
In streaming gold; syringa, ivory pure.
The Task, "The Winter's Walk at Noon," lines 149, 150.

The border under the terrace is clearing away to receive currant and gooseberry bushes, and a spot is found very suitable for raspberries.

The alterations and improvements within doors too, advance very properly, and the offices will be made very convenient indeed. Our dressing-table is constructing on the spot out of a large kitchen table belonging to the house, for doing which we have the permission of Mr. Husket, Lord Lansdown's painter—domestic painter I should call him, for he lives in the castle. Domestic chaplains have given way to this more necessary office, and I suppose whenever the walls want no touching up he is employed about my lady's face. . . .

Frank has got a very bad cough, for an Austen; but it does not disable him from making very nice fringe for the drawing-room curtains.

Mrs. Day has now got the carpet in hand, and Monday I hope will be the last of her employment here. A fortnight afterwards she is to be called again from the shades of her red-checked bed in an alley near the end of the High Street, to clean the new house and air the bedding.

We hear that we are envied our house by many people, and that the garden is the best in the town. There will be green baize enough for Martha's room and ours, not to cover them, but to lie over the part where it is most wanted, under the dressing table. Mary is to have a piece of carpeting for the same purpose; my mother says *she* does not want any, and it may certainly be better done without in her rooms than in Martha's and ours, from the difference of their aspect.

The author of the *Memoir* writes of this period from personal, though youthful, knowledge:

"My grandmother's commodious, old-fashioned house in a corner of Castle Square, had a pleasant garden, bounded on one side by the old city walls; the top of this wall was sufficiently wide to afford a pleasant walk with an extensive view, easily accessible to ladies by steps." He tells us further of a "fantastic edifice" which occupied Castle Square, "too large for the space in which it stood, though too small to accord well with its castellated style." This was the home of Lord Lansdowne's half-brother, whose marchioness "had a light phaeton, drawn by six, and sometimes by eight little ponies, each pair decreasing in size, and becoming lighter in colour, through all the grades of

dark brown, light brown, bay, and chestnut, as it was placed further away from the carriage. The two leading pairs were managed by two boyish postilions, the two pairs nearest to the carriage were driven in hand." And this "fairy equipage was all put together in the open square," beneath the Austens' windows!

Miss Mitford described Southampton a few years after the Austens had left the town, as "that lovely spot which combines all that is enchanting in wood and land and water with all that is buxom, blythe, and debonair in society—that charming town which is not a watering place only because it is something better. . . . Southampton has, in my eyes, an attraction independent of its scenery in the total absence of the vulgar hurry of business or the chilling apathy of fashion. It is, indeed, all life, all gaiety, but it has an airiness, an animation, which might become the capital of Fairyland."

As the Assembly Rooms, situated near the West Quay, were "very elegantly fitted up," and as "everybody who came to Southampton found it either their duty or their pleasure to call upon" the Austens; Jane was obviously able to enjoy as many balls and parties as she had always been accustomed to. Now, however, they were largely remembered and described for the reflected glory of palpitations and triumphs among the younger generation. She pretends at least, that she is now quite content to "leave off being young" in consideration of "many *douceurs*" to be found "in being a sort of chaperon, who was put on the sofa near the fire and could drink as much wine as she liked." There was a day, however, on which she fancied she could "just as well dance for a week together as for half an hour and, in spite of the shame of being so much older, felt with thankfulness that she was quite as happy then as she had been in the same place fifteen years ago"; and when their friends

begin being "very much concerned at their going away" she is ready to welcome an increase of amusement, quite in character with their approaching removal—"I mean to go to as many balls as possible, that I may have a good bargain."

Nevertheless, these were the days of the young people. "Uncle Edward reads and talks nonsense to his little nephew delightfully; more than he can always understand." There are frequent picnics, skating in "one of the pleasantest frosts she ever knew," "a little water-party" and indoor games of every description; where she remarks on "the ready civility which one sees in the best children in the present day, so unlike anything that I was myself at their age, that I am often all astonishment and shame."

Fanny Knight, in particular, has now become almost another sister. "I could not have supposed that a niece would ever have been so much to me. She is quite after one's own heart." And when the girl "went out of conceit" with a new cap directly she brought it home from the shop, her aunt only remarks: "I consider it as a thing of course at her time of life—one of the sweet taxes of youth—to choose in a hurry and make bad bargains!" It was a perquisite of childhood, that Jane herself, I suspect, never entirely relinquished, and always sympathetically understood.

She had not lost, meanwhile, the knack of killing an acquaintance in a phrase, or sacrificing sober truth to wit. Frank and Mary, she declares, were so annoyed with Cassandra's failure to come and help them in the furnishing that they "will choose everything in the style most likely to vex her—knives that will not cut, glasses that will not hold, a sofa without a seat, and a bookcase without shelves." She was very well entertained at a dance, "especially after

we had tuck'd Mrs. Lance's neckerchief in behind and fastened it with a pin, . . . though whether she boasts of any offspring besides a grand pianoforte did not appear." And she could still "make it a matter of joy that Mrs. Wylmot has another son, and that Lord Lucan has taken a mistress"; being compelled to "ring the changes of glads and sorrys for the rest of her page." For herself she has "two hands and a new thimble that lead a very idle life"; considers "everybody as having a right to marry *once* in their lives for love if they can," though "a widower with three children has no right to look higher than his daughter's governess," and is eagerly anticipating relief from "the torments of rice puddings and apple dumplings"; while Miss Owenson's *Ida of Athens* "might be worth reading in this weather, if the warmth of her language could affect the body."

Cassandra is told she is very amiable and very clever to write at such length, but she has certainly more little events than Jane has. And *she* has, after all, "constructed a smartish letter," considering her want of material, but "like her dear Dr. Johnson, she believes she has dealt more in notions than facts."

All such nonsense, however, is laid aside for a time, at the sad news of Mrs. Edward's death in October 1808, and in anxiety for the eleven motherless children. Fanny's age and character were, fortunately, well adapted to so serious a charge; but, for a time at least, while her own acute feelings must be Cassandra's particular concern, as she was on the spot, every one was busy contriving for the care and distraction of the younger mites; while "one's heart aches for the dejected mind of eight years old." Jane was grudging "the poor boys" to Steventon where, however, they had "more means of exercise and amusement than they could have with her"; but when they came to her a little

later, are said to have "behaved extremely well, showing quite as much feeling as one wishes to see, and on every occasion speaking of their father with the liveliest affection."

"We need not enter into a panegyric on the departed, but it is sweet to think of her great worth, of her solid principles, of her true devotion, her excellence in every relation of life."

Edward, unlike his three brothers, never married again; and the children became in a peculiar sense the charge and preoccupation of their aunts.

On the other hand, Charles, alone of the whole family, has for the time become scarcely discernible in the picture. He had been more, or for longer periods and in more distant waters, engaged in active service than Frank, and had inevitably become a somewhat unfamiliar figure from his distant marriage with the attorney-general of Bermuda's daughter, herself so far entirely unknown.

On the material side the family had now become re-established "in a comfortable state," though far from rich, and "much increase of house-rent would not do." Mrs. Austen began 1806 with £68, she begins 1807 with £99, and this after £32 purchase of stock. Frank limits himself to £400 a year, and they have "settled" that James's income is £2000, after paying a curate.

But Southampton, after all, had never been more than a *pied de terre*; well chosen to that end, and more than satisfying expectations, but never a home, such as every Austen desired, in the true sense of the word. Frank was not likely to remain much longer ashore, and his wife had been offered another, more convenient, anchorage.

Through all these years, if actually a time of comparative idleness, Jane was unable to pursue her work with steady concentration; though the wandering time includes the

revision of *Susan*, as well as the writing of *Lady Susan* and *The Watsons*.

It was Edward, however, who now found means to solve the problem of the future for his mother and sisters; and, without, of course, being aware how great a service he was thus rendering to mankind, gave Jane the opportunity for which she had so long been waiting. At the time of the earlier money gifts to Mrs. Austen, Francis had offered to double the contribution accepted from him, and there is no doubt that any of her sons would gladly have done as much for her now. Only Edward had cash and property in abundance on his hands; and, at the moment, was even more than normally inclined towards family hospitality by the death of his wife. They left Southampton for an indefinite visit to him at Godmersham; and it was there "the Chawton plan" was first suggested and discussed. "There are six chambers at Chawton; Henry wrote to my mother the other day and luckily mentioned the number, which is just what we wanted to be assured of. He speaks also of garrets for store places, one of which she immediately planned fitting up for Edward's man-servant; and now perhaps it must be for our own; for she is already quite reconciled to our keeping one." The squire had offered them the alternative of a house near Godmersham, but they were "Hampshire-born Austens," and, in every respect, far more tempted by the option of returning to their own side of the county.

The village of Chawton is about five miles from "White's Selborne," within easy distance of Alton, just where the Winchester Road branches off from that to Gosport. "Chawton Cottage" had been originally built for an inn, and was afterwards occupied by Mr. Knight's steward; "but by some additions to the house, and some judicious planting and screening," we are told in the *Memoir*, "it was

made a pleasant and commodious abode. Edward was experienced and adroit at such arrangements, and this was a labour of love to him. . . . It was quite as good as the generality of parsonage-houses then were, and much in the same style: sufficiently well-furnished, everything kept in good repair, altogether a comfortable and ladylike establishment."

It was a corner-house, of whitewashed or painted brick, with a deep-tiled roof and sash windows; the front door and both sitting-rooms originally looking upon the road, but "the large drawing-room window was blocked up and turned into a bookcase," and another opened upon the large garden behind and its "shrubbery walk" beneath great over-arching trees, of which Jane herself is said to have planted an oak.

> The whole of the shrubbery border [she wrote in May] will soon be very gay with pinks and sweet williams, in addition to the columbines already in bloom. The syringas too are coming out . . . you cannot imagine—it is not in human nature to imagine—what a nice walk we have round the orchard. The rows of beech look very well indeed, and so does the young quick-set hedge in the garden. I hear to-day that an apricot has been detected on one of the trees. . . .
>
> Yes, yes, we *will* have a pianoforte, as good a one as can be got for thirty guineas, and I will practice country dances, that we may have some amusement for our nephews and nieces, when we have the pleasure of their company.

Though nearly seventy at this time Mrs. Austen would still busy herself with needlework or in the garden, where she cut the roses, tied up drooping flowers, and dug up potatoes with her own hand. "It was a very quiet life," writes Miss Lefroy, "according to our ideas, but they were great readers, and besides the housekeeping our aunts occupied themselves in working for the poor and teaching some boy or girl to read or write." And when the Edward Austens were at the "Great House" all was merriment

and animation, for the host was gifted with "a spirit of fun and liveliness that made him especially delightful to all young people."

And somehow, though she had no separate study to retire to, it was here "in the general sitting-room, subject to all kinds of casual interruptions," that Jane contrived to become a great novelist.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DIVERSIONS OF A WIT

We have read a great deal, in many places, of the small loose leaves that could be quickly covered by blotting-paper on the unexpected appearance of children, visitor, or servant. One of the sitting-room doors at Chawton was given to creaking when opened or shut, but Jane did not wish the defect to be remedied, because it gave her a few minutes' extra warning of any stranger's approach.

But there are recollections, told by one of the younger Knights (named Marianne) in her old age to a later generation, which reveal more, I think, of Jane herself than any other extant passage of biography:

> I remember that when Aunt Jane came to us at Godmersham she used to bring the MS. of whatever novel she was writing with her, and would shut herself up with my elder sisters in one of the bedrooms to read them aloud. I and the younger ones used to hear peals of laughter through the door, and thought it very hard that we should be shut out from what was so delightful.
>
> *I also remember how Aunt Jane would sit quietly working beside the fire in the library, saying nothing for a good while, and then would suddenly burst out laughing, jump up and run across the room to a table where pens and paper were lying, write something down, and then come back to the fire and go on quietly working as before.*

For it is a fact, that Art held Jane Austen literally from the nursery to the grave. She never destroyed the burlesques, riddles, and priceless nonsense, of which we have been allowed stray glimpses, few and far between. She never passed a shop window or paid a call without creating human pictures round the scene, holding the children of her

imagination among her dearest friends. She was absorbed in a new novel at the gate of death.

And how perfectly the words of Marianne Knight disclose at once the understanding admiration and spontaneous enjoyment of her merry tales on which she could always depend within the circle of her folk; and her own absorption, at once eager and thoughtful in the world created in her brain, far away and yet so near and dear to the beloved humans at her side.

It had been the same certainly at Steventon, it was the same at Chawton, as here. No one of the older members of her own generation, or of the younger set, would have resented the obvious deduction from her sudden, unexplained outburst of delight, that her mind was busy over something in which, for the moment, they had no part; that she had been scarcely conscious of any one's presence in the room; but caught unawares by some knotty problem that had beset her when last at work at the desk and, having found her answer in the firelight, let out a shout of triumph in victory over doubt, hurrying away to record the long-sought solution while it was fresh in her mind. And then—came quietly back to her flesh and blood fellow-men.

That, I think, is Jane Austen herself.

And what honour is also due to others in that quiet room, who must have greatly desired a share in her delicious secret but, respecting the artist's dislike of exhibiting a phrase or scene, however perfect, without its context, were content to wait till she was ready to show them the completed composition.

In Jane herself, finally, we see two strong forces at work; by which she was always governed, keeping each resolutely in its place. She had the right, as indeed genius compelled her, to give the world of imagination first place in her own heart and mind. This she could never, and was not called

upon, to forget. But, on the other hand, the joys and sorrows of the living were, in *one* sense, *real*, as those of the others were not; and for this reason had claims upon her sympathy and attention which could not be denied. It was not an admission that morality is greater than beauty, or any false modesty about the merits and importance of her own gifts, that controlled her conduct; but a wonderful sanity in judging the relations between life and art, a sense of values and proportion, with an highly developed conscience to compel obedience when reason had issued its commands.

We cannot suppose that such division of energy could be accomplished without great effort and marvellous self-control; and since she kept the eager impulses and enthusiasms of youth to the end—and, had she not, her genius would have suffered a sad decay—the strength of mind wore out bodily endurance in one so quick to respond to all emotional excitement, in fiction or real life.

We should not, once more, overlook the share of others in her triumph, the very real assistance the Austens gave, with no less spontaneity and understanding than her own, to Jane's art. If in the more superficial aspect she might be supposed unfortunate in her complete lack of *professionally* intellectual associates, she had an exceptional share of what is certainly more unusual, and very possibly of greater value, the fullest appreciation and understanding honour from the intimate companions of daily life.

Genius will not be analysed by the most astute and well-informed criticism ever accomplished by man. But the expression of art may be examined and in a measure understood. We can at least conjecture how Jane Austen came to follow certain methods of technique, what she achieved in actual production, and a little of the philosophy and feeling behind her work.

We have seen, that while experimenting with the pen, not so far with intention for publication, but most probably well aware that she was in training for authorship to come, she took the line of satirical burlesque designed, consciously or by chance, to expose something of the many pitfalls and absurdities common to all recognizably second-rate, which she clearly saw the necessity to avoid.

When deliberately preparing work which might, she hoped, be one day worthy of pleasing the public; *and* worthy of her own conceptions about art, she seems to have reversed her method by basing her structure upon imitation of what she held to be excellent in its kind. More simply put: while despising almost everything in average, circulating-library fiction, she admired a great deal in Fanny Burney's novels, and loved Fanny Burney herself. Caroline Austen records that she remembers an evening at Chawton when her aunt "took up a volume of *Evelina* and read a few pages of 'Mr. Smith and the Broughtons,' and I thought it was like a play." Text-book criticism, so far, has done scant justice to *Evelina*, *Cecilia*, or even, if justly estimated, to the forgotten or ignored *Camilla*. To some extent the stories are read and enjoyed for their girlish naïveté and gay pictures of a century, stamped for ever upon our memories by the masterful personality of her own dictionary friend. But the extraordinary advance in Miss Burney's work beyond the great beginnings of Richardson and Fielding, despite, I admit, its almost complete ignorance of technique and its disastrous lack of form or discretion, has been almost entirely passed by and overlooked. If the faults, for Jane Austen's convenience, are obvious and easy to avoid, the more subtle virtues are such as must have instantly attracted her sympathy and admiration. When not tortured or intoxicated by storms of artificial emotion, the leading characters of Fanny Burney are far more real and natural than Pamela,

Sir Charles Grandison, or even that perfect type of eighteenth-century manhood, Tom Jones. That is, they are not prepared or thought out by any mental process of observation and reflection; but allowed to be, spontaneously, themselves.

More than this, Fanny Burney herself is here, there, and everywhere in the tale, pouring out with no thought, indeed, of art or convention, the dear secrets of every woman's heart; laughing at, adoring, or frankly hating "the men," without fear or favour; flinging away the dirt and sly suggestiveness of popular fiction; finding adventure, character-tests, and excitement round the tea-table; shattering the complacency of the male by her sensitive refinement and mental independence.

Now the chief fault Jane Austen had detected in conventional fiction was its foolish and dangerous travesty of nature and reality; and she knew how little any woman, before or except Fanny Burney, had dared to speak for woman, as she in her turn determined she would speak.

"If I had a memory," said Captain Harville, "I could bring you fifty quotations in a moment on my side the argument, and I do not think I ever opened a book which had not something to say upon woman's inconstancy. Songs and proverbs, all talk of woman's fickleness. But perhaps you will say these were all written by men."

"Perhaps I shall," was the quiet reply. "Yes, yes, if you please, *no reference to examples in books.* Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. *I will not allow books to prove anything.*"

And when Jane Austen allows Anne Elliot to admit that "we can never expect to prove anything upon such a point," it was because she knew, and chose thus to remind us, that she and Fanny Burney had proved so much.

Jane Austen's brain, of course, was far too alert, her sense

of humour was too continuously awake, to admire without qualification, or to imitate without complete independence. What she regarded as the fundamental strength or underlying significance of Miss Burney's work she set out to develop and extend. Possibly as an easy or safe test of her own, as yet untried, power; and because she cared more for character than situation or plot, she used the framework and, to some extent, the ideas found in her predecessor's tales.

As we are now considering her official output, the work which she deliberately offered the public, in the final form that had received her best critical approval; and *not* concerned with the order of date at which each was originally conceived, it is no less permissible or even necessary than convenient, to start on *Northanger Abbey*, with its obviously youthful concept and treatment.

Here we find the first method of burlesque to expose absurdities, combined with the later and more subtle imitation of merits. It is not here intended, as in *Love and Freindship*, to present a tabloid exposure of all the "Evergreen Follies" of fiction; but the more kindly satire by exaggeration upon Mrs. Radcliffe and her foolish girl admirers, that is not without its serious critical application, is too obvious and convincing to require any laboured proof. Yet though in words as cold and merciless as the earlier burlesques, it is most cunningly woven into the humanity of the tale; revealing, in turn, the shallow vanity of Isabella, the delicious innocence of Catherine, and Henry's generous wit.

Catherine herself is certainly drawn, and touched up, from Evelina; playing the same part in similar situations. The earlier tale describes "a young lady's entrance into the world," not "pretending to show the world what it actually is, but what it appears to a young girl of seventeen." Catherine "had reached the age of seventeen . . .

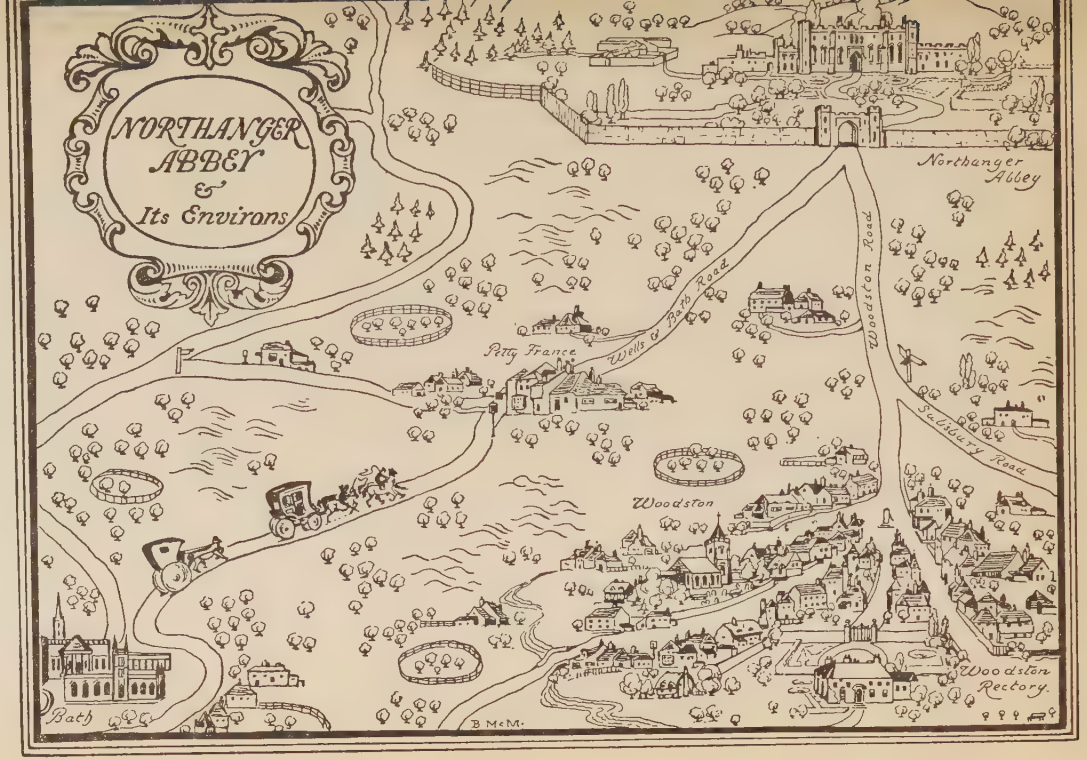
JANE AUSTEN
Portrait by Cassandra

when launched into all the difficulties and dangers of a six weeks' residence in Bath . . . and her mind was about as ignorant and uninformed as the female mind at seventeen usually is." We may note, in passing, that no other heroine of Jane Austen's was ever sent out into the world; or, except for Lydia's unlucky trip to Brighton, ever separated from the restraining influences of home in youth.

Bath is certainly painted for us, in *Northanger Abbey*, "as it appears to Catherine," with a halo of rapturous surprise it could never have inspired in older minds. She, too, investigates no more of the historic city than its assemblies, pump rooms, and fashionable thoroughfares disclosed; like Evelina untutored in the conventions by those who ought to have faced their responsibilities; awkwardly placed between the elegant Tilneys (after Lord Orville) and the upstart Thorpes (after Miss Brangton), and guided with infinite tact, though considerably more humour, through every one of her most embarrassing indiscretions by the hero himself. Finally, both young ladies, in flat contradiction of everything man conceives becoming a nice girl, fall hopelessly in love at sight, and give themselves completely away in every sentence, without a moment's consideration of the hero's "honourable" or compromising "intentions." Jane Austen herself gaily betrays the source of her unusual courage and sincerity by calmly asserting, what she assumes her readers will recognize as the very opposite of the truth, that for "this *new* circumstance in romance the credit of a wild imagination is *all her own*."

Now there are few incidents, I imagine, more perverse in the whole history of criticism, than its wilful and persistent blindness to the unexpected subtlety of Lord Orville. Subtlety is not often found in Fanny Burney, but would be at once seen and appreciated by Jane Austen. Orville we loosely compare with the tiresome Sir Charles Grandison;

Northanger Abbey
Beechen Cliffe
Lansdown Hill
Kingsdown Parade
Queen Square
Queen's Parade
Gay Street
Milsom Street
Pulteney Road
Great Pulteney Street
Sydney Place
Sidney Place
Sidney Gardens
Camden Place
Assembly Rooms
The Paragon
Argyle Buildings
Lansdown Road
Upper Bristol Road
Lower Bristol Road
Kingsmead Street
Monmouth Street
Broad Street
Union Street
Cheap Street
Westgate Buildings
Kingsmead Square
Kingsmead Terrace
Lower Borough Walls
Upper Borough Walls
Queen's Parade Place
Green Park
Green Park Buildings
Bath Street
Abbey Church Yard
Abbey Green
Orchard Street
Old Bridge
New Bridge
Pulteney Bridge
River Avon
Lansdown Place
Kingsmead Terrace
Kingsmead Hill
Kingsdown Parade
Kingsdown Hill
Kingsdown Road
Kingsdown Terrace
Kingsdown Place
Kingsdown Square
Kingsdown Crescent
Kingsdown Avenue
Kingsdown Grove
Kingsdown Mews
Kingsdown Lane
Kingsdown Court
Kingsdown Gardens
Kingsdown Walk
Kingsdown Path
Kingsdown Steps
Kingsdown Bridge
Kingsdown Ferry
Kingsdown Ferry Road
Kingsdown Ferry Steps
Kingsdown Ferry Bridge
Kingsdown Ferry Path
Kingsdown Ferry Walk
Kingsdown Ferry Lane
Kingsdown Ferry Square
Kingsdown Ferry Terrace
Kingsdown Ferry Place
Kingsdown Ferry Avenue
Kingsdown Ferry Grove
Kingsdown Ferry Mews
Kingsdown Ferry Court
Kingsdown Ferry Gardens
Kingsdown Ferry Walk
Kingsdown Ferry Path
Kingsdown Ferry Steps
Kingsdown Ferry Bridge
Kingsdown Ferry Road
Kingsdown Ferry Street


NORTHANGER
ABBEY
&
Its Environs
Northanger Abbey
Woodston Road
Wells & Bath Road
Petty France
Woodston
Salisbury Road
Woodston Rectory
Bath
B McM

but could any one possibly conceive Richardson's immaculate Fine Gentleman in the rôle of unofficial confessor and watchful guardian to one so alarmingly indiscreet and so mysteriously entangled with villains and vulgarians as Evelina Anville? Was Harriet Byron ever so unfortunate or so unwise? Lord Orville's manners are no less perfect, his birth and breeding are equally superior; but he is ruled in every thought and action by the heart. With most scrupulous delicacy to avoid the charge of interfering or of giving offence, he again and again defies convention by taking care of a girl when appearances are all against her; modestly inquiring what may be troubling her, and how he can smooth her path; watching day and night to ward off dangers he can neither foresee nor understand.

Henry Tilney is, obviously, more modern than Orville, and works with a lighter touch; though this is chiefly because Catherine runs no serious risk; and is never pursued by vice. But when her folly aspires to the wildest and most cruel suspicions of his own father, no woman could have administered a rebuke with more disarming gentleness that was yet dignified and decisive; leaving her self-respect unwounded while exposing the full enormity of her mistake. Was ever a fool so perfect a "little lady," a perfect gentleman ever so completely kind!

His father, the general, however, is "introduced" from *Cecilia*, and the likeness cannot be denied or supposed accidental. Cecilia could never determine "whether Mr. Delvile's haughtiness or his condescension humbled her most," and he became "at length so infinitely condescending, with intention to give her courage, that he totally depressed her with mortification and chagrin." Catherine always found that "in spite of General Tilney's great civilities to her, in spite of his thanks, invitations and compliments, it had been a release to get away from him."

And if Jane herself, in the first exuberance of her youth's quick wit and high spirits, appears anywhere in the novels, it is to Henry Tilney that we must turn. He has, it seems to me, just that essential culture, that infinitely light touch of phrase, that laughter-loving charity towards the world, and that understanding heart, which was Jane Austen in her spring.

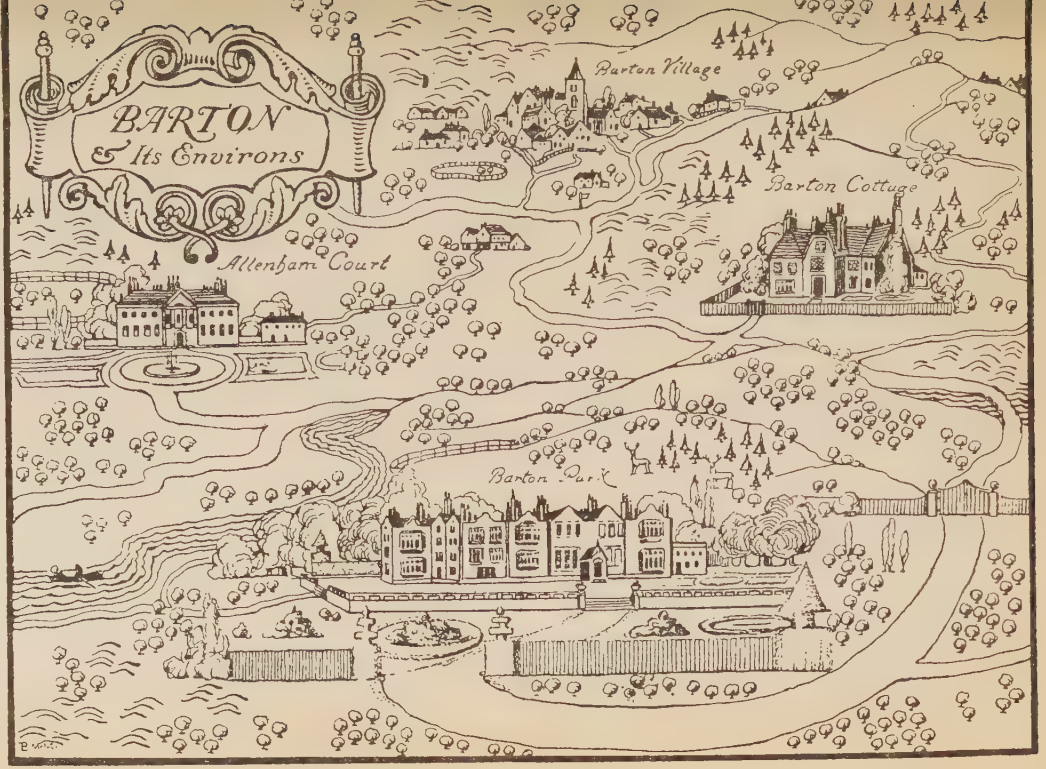
After Catherine and Henry, meet Marianne Dashwood. However tempted to imagine that *Sense and Sensibility* was designed to portray Jane herself in contrast with Cassandra, there is little, or nothing, beyond the deep mutual devotion to support such an idea. The inspiration of this tale is Fanny Burney, exemplar of the innate graces and charm, commonly lost in the affectations of self-conscious sensibility; and the leading ladies present an opposition in temperament which is the structural basis of her *Camilla*.

Every one knows the concluding sentence of *Cecilia* which determined both plot and title of *Pride and Prejudice*: the last words of Camilla point no less directly to *Sense and Sensibility*.

> Thus ended the long conflicts, doubts, suspenses, and sufferings of Edgar and Camilla: who, without one inevitable calamity, one unavoidable distress, so nearly fell the sacrifice to the two extremes of IMPRUDENCE AND SUSPICION, to the natural heedlessness of youth unguided, or to the acquired distrust of experience that had been wounded.

Here, indeed, Miss Burney has not hit on the happy phrase that could be used for title; but the "Imprudence" of Camilla is the direct consequence of unbridled "Sensibility," and Edgar's "Suspicion" is based on a certain kind of "Sense." Like Elinor, he is rather uncomfortably older and more sedate than his years, always ready to undertake practical responsibilities, and efficient in conduct: no less tender, generous, and forgiving at heart. Like her he had been deceived; and, like her, he loves but disapproves that "happy little person" Camilla.

Sense & Sensibility
Bristol Channel
Lundy Island
Ilfracombe
Lynmouth
Barnstaple
Combe Martin
Ilfracombe
Hartland
Clovelly
Bideford
Torrington
Chumleigh
Tiverton
Holsworthy
Hatherleigh
Oakhampton Castle
Launceston
Lifton
Tavistock
Crediton
Silverton
Exeter
Hamilton
Moreton Hampstead
Topsham
Exmouth
Colyton
Sidmouth
Dartmoor Forest
Ashburton
Plymouth
Totnes
Brent
Dartmouth Castle
Plymouth Sound
Torr
Modbury
Salcombe
King's Bridge
English Channel


BARTON
& Its Environs
Barton Village
Barton Cottage
Allenham Court
Barton Park

Marianne, again, surely has Camilla's

> utmost vivacity of sentiment, the charm of soul, eternally beaming in the eyes, playing in every feature, glowing in the complexion, and brightening every smile. . . .
>
> Every look was a smile, every step was a spring, every thought was a hope, every feeling was joy. . . . Her disposition was ardent in sincerity, her mind untainted with evil. The reigning and radical defect of her character—an imagination that submitted to no control—proved not any antidote against her attractions: it caught, by its force and fire, the quick-kindling admiration of the lively; it possessed, by magnetic persuasion, the witchery to create sympathy in the serious.

Willoughby and Brandon, in fact, were alike captivated by her engaging folly.

Here Jane Austen uses little of the earlier plot; and by avoiding the conventional issue of misunderstandings that disturb the course of love, puts less strain upon the arranged discord of temperament, and is able to reveal the underlying sympathy and affection with less interruption and more natural simplicity. She is more concerned with the *idea* of sensibility than with Miss Burney's characters or plot; and, by instinct or intuition, has produced a picture that the eighteenth-century novelist might almost have seen in her glass. For "sensibility" belonged no less to Fanny Burney than to her heroines, as it was a little overdone in her sister Susan. Yet Jane could have seen nothing of this old-world grace, outside its artificial exaggerations; like Isabelle Thorpe's or Laura's and Sophia's in *Love and Freindship*. She must have caught the fancy of endeavouring to revive from Miss Burney its essential and genuine charm, so falsely presented in the novels of her own generation. It is a study from books, expressed in terms of her own day and generation; revealing her own common sense, which yet loved impulsive imprudence.

There is a striking contrast to the charm of Mrs. Dashwood, who has almost more sensibility than Marianne with

equal or greater unselfish love, in the confessions of an old lady in *Love and Freindship*. The lady here reveals what Mrs. Radcliffe describes as the "dangers of sensibility."

"A sensibility too tremblingly alive to every affliction of my friends, my acquaintance, and particularly to every affliction of my own, was my only fault, if fault it could be called. Alas! how altered now! Though indeed my own misfortunes do not make less impression on me than they ever did, *yet now I never feel for those of another*,"—which is precisely what Mrs. Dashwood did.

The relation of *Pride and Prejudice* to *Cecilia* is more familiar and more complete; though when Jane Austen first thought of disclosing it in the title we do not precisely know. Miss Burney piled up a sensational mass of trouble upon her hero and heroine, chiefly contrived from their opposing outlooks upon life; and when at last they came together in mutual affection and respect their friend very truly remarked that "the whole of this unfortunate business has been the result of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE."

Here Jane Austen closely follows, not only the subject or basic structure of the tale, but its leading characters,[1] most dramatic scenes and the general plot. From the first, both Cecilia and Elizabeth are strongly prejudiced against the inherited arrogance of the high-born hero, and his more pompous progenitors. Jane Austen creates a more natural barrier, or occasion for pride through Miss Bennet's impossible relations, towards whom her loyalty is instinctive and unstrained, and who, on the other hand, provide Darcy with a justifiable dislike for the connection. Her feelings are merely *intensified* and *fixed* by prejudice, as his are by pride. Between Cecilia and Delvile the emotions are strained from the first, because she was not personally

[1] She also uses something of her own experience in this story. Elizabeth is superficially "a portrait of the artist," the feminine of Henry Tilney, and we are all inclined to suspect something of Cassandra in Jane.

prejudiced against his character, and neither his pride nor his mother's were affronted by her manners or connections. The barrier between them was purely artificial, dependent upon the caprice which induced her uncle to put a clause in his will that compelled her future husband to give up his own name and take hers. The difficulties are arranged and introduced by the author, instead of arising naturally from conflicting temperaments and normally varied upbringing.

But from such different origins both novelists create an identical situation and develop it along similar lines. There are two great duel-dialogues in each tale. Cecilia admires and is greatly attracted by Delvile from the first, but being too conventional to betray her partiality, gradually comes to believe him no less a slave to false pride than his preposterous and insulting father. Wherefore the young man does not even ask for the hand he had no suspicion might have been his already, but, with no less vanity and offensive condescension than Darcy, attempts to explain and justify the pride of birth that has induced him to deny himself the dangerous happiness of friendship with one to whom he has been betrayed, at unguarded moments, into occasional outbursts of tenderness. It had been a struggle, but for him there seemed no possible doubt of the self-restraint he was bound to exert: an insolent assumption that left Cecilia bewildered, disgusted, and justly incensed.

Darcy has struggled with equal intensity, but on more straightforward lines with a different result. Pride forces him to dwell with ill-bred emphasis upon the scruples he was still almost ashamed to have laid aside, and to expose his insolent assurance that Elizabeth would gratefully accept the honour he was so reluctantly induced to bestow. For her part, she had been prejudiced at sight against his haughty manner, excited to active dislike by his interference in her sister's love-affairs, and incited to believe him vindictive and

unjust by the lying insinuations of the villain. Here is far greater scope for strong drama, a fair field for the exercise of unbridled scorn, more than a match for his startled attempt to maintain an air of affronted superiority. Yet both scenes run on similar lines.

It is the same with the later passage of arms between the ladies. We can respect and, in some moods, even love Mrs. Delvile; but her pride is no less offensive and intolerable than Lady Catherine's. Here again Cecilia is hampered by grateful affection, though no less hurt and horrified by her friend's preposterous claims. Elizabeth has received nothing from Lady Catherine but the most offensive and interfering condescension; and here again she can openly meet the old tyrant with scorn far more deadly than her own.

The battle of both books is one; both, of course, end in reconciliation through understanding, the conquest of *her* prejudice and *his* pride, though neither cause nor cure are quite the same.

Jane Austen's gaiety and humour were, of course, absolutely her own; never perhaps quite so marked as in *Pride and Prejudice*; certainly never so clearly seen in all their glorious abandon of delicious absurdity and youthful gusto as in that "creature of the highest and most Shakespearean comedy," William Collins: the creation of a poet, himself a poet and a romantic; "perhaps the happiest creature in all her pages," an "Austen character who stood by himself, a creature of larger dimensions than the rest, or one who is presented to us, shall we say, with an extra dimension." [1]

Yet *something* of Mr. Collins's greatest achievement—the immortal proposal to his pretty cousin—was anticipated by that neglected pioneer woman-novelist, Sarah, sister of the author of *Tom Jones*. I would not like to assert that Jane *remembered* "David Simple" as she wrote, but she must

[1] *The English Comic Characters*, by J. B. Priestley.

Pride
&
Prejudice
Royston
Barley
Buntingford
Stevenage
Hitchin
Welwyn
Hertford
Ware
Tring
Broadwater
Tring Park
Broadway
Chipperfield
Kings Langley
Rickmansworth
St Albans
Hatfield
Hatfield House
Clipping Market
Waltham Cross
Cheshunt
Broxbourne
Wormley
Theobalds
Bishop's Stortford
Pishiobury
Pishiobury Park
Gorhambury House
Gorhambury Park
Aldbury
Aldbury Hall
Pelham Hall
Darrell
Bonningtons Park
Widdial Hall
Cromfield Lodge
Bull Lock
Buntlands
Mundingford
Walton
Lilley
Luton
Luton Park
Aston
Aston Park
Hoo Park
Hoo Place
Abbots Langley
Cassiobury Park
Cassiobury
Watford
Aldenham
Aldenham Park
Elstree
Elstree or Industry
Furneux Pelham
Furneux Pelham Hall
Hunsdon
Hunsdon Park
Kings Walden
Kings Walden Park
Offley Wood
Offley
Hexton
Hexton Park
Preston
Preston Park
Hexton
Hexton Park
Tring
Tring Park
Broadway
Chipperfield
Kings Langley
Abbots Langley
Cassiobury Park
Watford
Rickmansworth
Offley Wood
Offley
Hexton
Hexton Park
Preston
Preston Park
Royston
Barley
Buntingford
Stevenage
Hitchin
Welwyn
Hertford
Ware
Tring
Broadwater
Tring Park
Broadway
Chipperfield
Kings Langley
Rickmansworth
St Albans
Hatfield
Hatfield House
Clipping Market
Waltham Cross
Cheshunt
Broxbourne
Wormley
Theobalds
Bishop's Stortford
Pishiobury
Pishiobury Park
Gorhambury House
Gorhambury Park
Aldbury
Aldbury Hall
Pelham Hall
Darrell
Bonningtons Park
Widdial Hall
Cromfield Lodge
Bull Lock
Buntlands
Mundingford
Walton
Lilley
Luton
Luton Park
Aston
Aston Park
Hoo Park
Hoo Place
Abbots Langley
Cassiobury Park
Cassiobury
Watford
Aldenham
Aldenham Park
Elstree
Elstree or Industry
Furneux Pelham
Furneux Pelham Hall
Hunsdon
Hunsdon Park
Kings Walden
Kings Walden Park
Offley Wood
Offley
Hexton
Hexton Park
Preston
Preston Park
N
W
E
S

LONGBOURN
& Its Environs
Netherfields
Military Camp
Merton
Mr. Phillips' House
To London
Longbourn
The home of Sir Wm Lucas

surely have read the tale, and Miss Fielding's "country gentleman designed for Cynthia's husband" is an earlier incarnation of Jane's gloriously pompous fool. He, too, understood the condescension of husbands and the duties of a wife:

> In short, madam [continued he], I have seen you two or three times, altho' you did not know it; I like your person, hear you have had a sober education, think it time to have an heir to my estate, and am willing, if you consent to it, to make you my wife; notwithstanding your father tells me, he can't lay you down above two thousand pounds. I am none of those nonsensical fools that can whine and make romantick love, I leave that to *younger brothers*, let my estate speak for me; I shall expect nothing from you, but that you will retire into the country with me, and take care of my family. I must inform you, I shall desire to have everything in order; for I love good *eating and drinking*, and have been used to have my own humour from my youth, which, if you will observe and comply with, I shall be very kind to you, and take care of the *main chance* for you and your children.

In our own day Mr. Winston Churchill, from across the herring-pond, has once more taken up the tale in *Mr. Crewe's Career*. This modern windbag, in his turn, explains, when kindly informing Victoria that she was perfectly fitted to be his helpmeet, precisely what he expected her to undertake. I must believe that here recollection guided his pen.

> "First, I will give you my idea of a woman."
>
> "I am all attention," said Victoria.
>
> "Well," said Mr. Crewe, putting the tops of his fingers together, "she should excel as a housewife. I haven't any use for your so-called intellectual woman. Of course, what I mean by a housewife is something a little less *bourgeoise*; she should be able to conduct an establishment with the neatness and dispatch and economy of a well-run hotel. She should be able to seat a table instantly and accurately, giving to the prominent guests the prestige they deserve. Nor have I any sympathy with the notion that makes a married woman a law unto herself. She enters voluntarily into an agreement whereby she puts herself under the control of her husband: his interests, his career, his——"
>
> "Comfort?" suggested Victoria.

"Yes, his comfort—all that comes first. And his establishment is conducted primarily, and his guests selected, in the interests of his fortunes. Of course, that goes without saying of a man in high place in public life. But he must choose for his wife a woman who is equal to all these things—to my mind her highest achievement—who makes the most of the position he gives her, presides at his table and entertainments, and reaches such people as, for any reason, he is unable to reach. I have taken the pains to point out these things in a general way, for obvious reasons. My greatest desire is to be fair. . . .

"And of course it is especially important for a man in my position to study every aspect of the problem before he takes a step."

There is much written of *Pride and Prejudice* in the *Letters* which, apart from its evidence of Jane's deep affection for "her own darling child" newly arrived from London, includes critical comment that goes some way to reveal her ideas of what a novelist's aims should be:

Jan. 29, 1813. Miss Benn was amused, poor soul! *That* she could not help, you know, with two such persons to lead the way, but she really does seem to admire Elizabeth. I must confess that I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print, and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like *her* at least I do not know. There are a few typical [sic] errors, and a "said he," or a "said she," would sometimes make the dialogue more immediately clear, but

> I do not write for such dull elves
> As have not a great deal of ingenuity themselves.[1]

The second volume is shorter than I could wish, but the difference is not so much in reality as in look, there being a much larger proportion of narrative in that part. I have lop't and crop't so successively, however, that I imagine it must be rather shorter than *Sense and Sensibility* altogether. Now I will try and write of something else; and it shall be an entirely new subject—ordination—[Much of the plot in *Mansfield Park* depends on Edmund's resolution to go into the church, despite Mary Crawford's objections to marrying a clergyman.]

Feb. 4, 1813. Upon the whole, however, I am quite vain enough and well-satisfied enough. The work is rather too light and bright and sparkling. It wants shade; it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn

[1] I do not rhyme to that dull elf,
Who cannot image to himself.

Marmion, vi. 38.

specious nonsense, about something unconnected with the story; an essay on writing, a critique on Walter Scott, or the history of Buonaparte, or anything that would form a contrast, and bring the reader with increased delight to the playfulness and epigrammatism of the general style. I doubt your agreeing with me here. I know your starched notions. The caution observed at Steventon with regard to the possession of the book is an agreeable surprise to me, and I heartily wish it may be the means of saving you from anything unpleasant—but you must be prepared for the neighbourhood being perhaps already informed of there being such a work in the world and in the Chawton world. . . . The greatest blunder in the printing I have met with is in p. 220, l. 3 [1]; where two speeches are made into one. There might as well have been no supper at Longburn; but I suppose it was the remains of Mrs. Bennet's old Meryton habits.

Monday, May 24, 1813. Henry and I went to the exhibition in Spring Gardens. It is not thought a good collection, but I was very well pleased, particularly (pray tell Fanny) with a small portrait of Mrs. Bingley, excessively like her.

I went in hopes of seeing one of her sister, but there was no Mrs. Darcy. Perhaps, however, I may find her in the great exhibition, which we shall go to if we have time. I have no chance of her in the collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds's paintings, which is now showing in Pall Mall, and which we are also to visit.

Mrs. Bingley's is exactly herself—size, shaped face, features, and sweetness; there never was a greater likeness. She is dressed in a white gown, with green ornaments, which convinces me of what I had always supposed, that green was a favourite colour with her. I dare say Mrs. D. will be in yellow.

Monday evening. We have been both to the Exhibition and Sir J. Reynolds, and I am disappointed, for there was nothing like Mrs. D. at either. I can only imagine that Mr. Darcy prizes any picture of her too much to like it should be exposed to the public eye. I can imagine he would have that sort of feeling—that mixture of love, pride, and delicacy.

Jane confided in the family that "Kitty married a clergyman near Pemberley, and Mary had to be contented with one of Uncle Phillip's clerks."

Had Jane's affection and admiration for Fanny Burney been less obviously sincere, we might have thought, in our

[1] p. 343, l. 23 in Oxford Edition: "[Jane]. How hard it is in some cases to be believed. [Elizabeth] And how impossible in others," were run together: a passage I have the honour of having been the first to print correctly.

Pickering, pinxt. *Greatbatch, sculpt.*

FRONTISPIECE TO "MANSFIELD PARK," 1833

Miss Crawford smiled her approbation, and hastened to complete her gift by putting the necklace round her, and making her see how well it looked.

haste, that Evelina and her sister-heroines were used by Jane, for her diversion, with no more respect than she afforded the languid maidens of the Minerva Press. And it is true that whatever she transplants from the earlier tales is cultivated with care to her own ends. She was far above literal imitation or reproduction. But with *Love and Freindship* to guide us, there should be no confusion or doubt. There the borrowed types are inhuman, the laughter is spiked with scorn. She carries Miss Burney's frenzies and transports into a harbour of smiles, but it is the laugh of a friend.

For all their piled-up agony and passion-storms Evelina and the rest are fundamentally very human and very real, as "that large class of women called heroines" were *not*. Only Jane flung off every shred of superfluous novel conventions, and gave them a new and vigorous life.

There are other writers, including Shakespeare, who formed themselves on a combination of laughter and applause for their fellow-craftsman, playing with predecessors for sheer delight in the mastery of their own wit. And it is not surprising to find that Jane Austen has acquired a certainty of touch and direction in the process; well-equipped now to proceed on her own foundations, well-assured of her goal.

To some extent she continues the process of cutting or correction in working upon Miss Burney. The worked-up emotion is avoided, as well as all that can properly be called adventure. Extreme contrasts in social position are not permitted. The language is purified both from colloquialisms and over-ornament. But the basis of her reconstruction is by addition. The persons are *always* natural, not only on occasion; the plots or situations are re-contrived out of ordinary daily life, to avoid any strain in the circumstances or relations between the *dramatis personæ*; and above all tragedy, moral preachments and excess of sensibility

are transformed to tranquillity and laughter by the finest subtlety of humour and a polished wit, unknown to her original.

When working entirely (that is, with only hints from others in *side* issues) upon her own invention, the characterization becomes more modern—almost moving, as it did in actual dates of composition, from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century outlook, while the plots are more compact or better constructed. In a sense, moreover, the whole atmosphere is more completely domestic; with even less assistance from the old romance (or world of heroes and heroines), and less adventure.

The first story *begun* at Chawton and not Burney-inspired, is *Mansfield Park*, and it is here that her own actual experience and that of her family are most specifically and openly used in some of its most striking scenes and leading characters. That is, they come from more modern life than the eighteenth century *ingenues*, Catherine Morland and Marianne Dashwood, or the old-world pomposity of Lady Catherine de Burgh and the household-chaplain-retainer attitude of Mr. Collins.

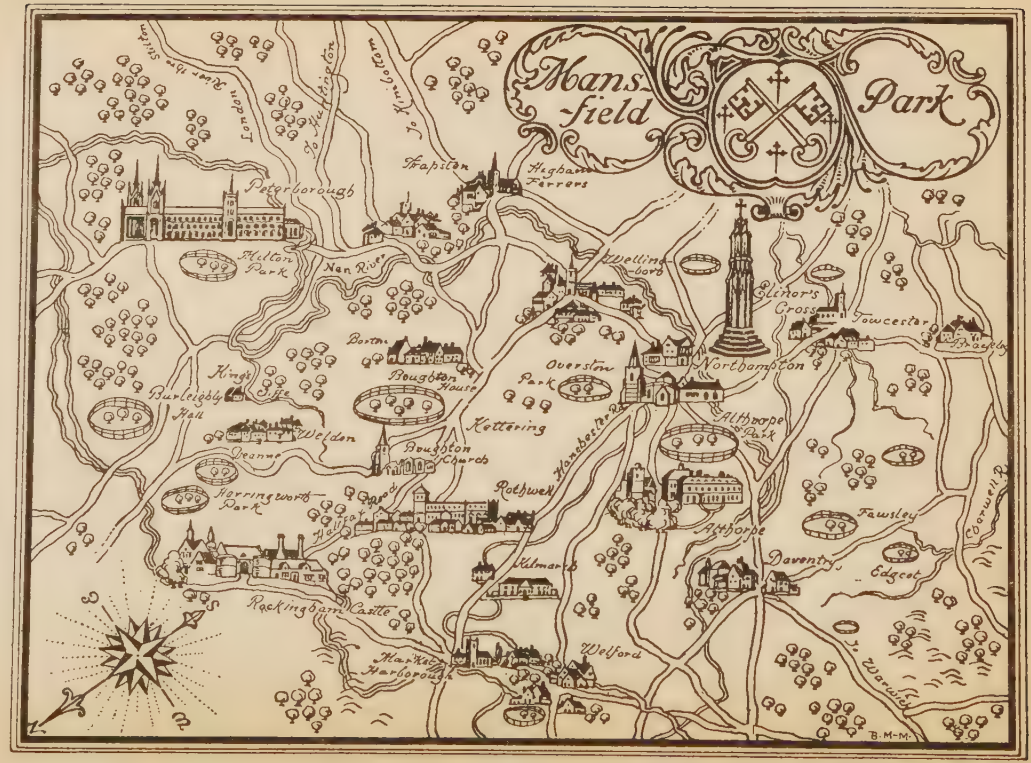
The intrigue behind private theatricals here is not, of course, derived from the vicarage; but the Austens were all amateur actors and dramatists. Parlour plays were one of their favourite diversions, and Eliza Feuillide, one of the leading spirits on their stage, has been disclosed to us as, in many respects, the model for Mary Crawford, including her distaste for a clerical husband. As for William Price and the intimate naval atmosphere of many scenes, this is straight from Francis and Charles; and we may note, in passing, how evidently Jane Austen was always careful to keep even her deepest emotions and strongest interests in their place. In *Mansfield Park*, as later in *Persuasion*, her intimate familiarity and love for sailors are woven into the foundations

of the structure and immensely strengthen its development. That her two most gentle or shrinking heroines, Fanny and Anne, who never willingly take the centre of the stage or step into the limelight, should be upheld by an instinctive taste for adventure and the heroic, should "glory in being a sailor's wife," reveals a sense for drama which is operative in all the novels, most powerful because never paraded or forced. And we know the sentiment was Jane's own.

It is not straining a point, either, to observe that the worldly, or society, manner of the Henry Crawford "interpretation" of a villain is more modern than Wickham, Willoughby, or any disturber of Catherine Morland's affection; their conduct of the plot builds up a more artistic construction.[1] We could almost fancy, indeed, that Jane Austen was trying her powers in this story, which has more movement and a more elaborate framework than anything before, or later, attempted. There is, too, more reliance on emotion and less on humour. Even Mrs. Norris, in one view as triumphant a figure of fun as Lady Catherine or Mr. Collins, has a much greater influence on the happiness and ultimate fate of the leading characters—a modern version of "obstinate fathers" and their "cruel persecutions" of the young people under their charge. The "triangle" is not found in Fanny Burney, nor a gentleman flirting with two ladies at once; and Jane repeated the second novelty, though not the first. She has, in fact, very definitely taken her own stand.

This is, however, the only novel in which Jane Austen's conduct of affairs has been disputed by some of her critics. It is maintained, and it is difficult to deny, that Henry Crawford had no less moral than literary taste, some strength

[1] Except that Fanny's visit to Portsmouth, though delightful reading in itself, is inartistically detached from the main movement of the story; and elevates Henry Crawford to moral heights that put his casual viciousness, as a home-wrecker, out of place.


Hans-field
Park
Peterborough
Milton Park
Nen River
Orton
Kings Cliffe
Burleigh Hall
Bougbton House
Overstow Park
Northampton
Welling-boro
Eleanors Cross
Towcester
Althorpe Park
Kettering
Welden
Deanne
Boughton Church
Rothwell
Harrowden
Althorpe
Fawsley
Daventry
Edgcot
Ullmarsh
Racking-barn Castle
Welford
Harleston
Harborough
Warwick
Leicester
B.M.M.

MANSFIELD PARK & Its Environs
Sotherton Village
Alms-House
Parsonage
Sotherton
Steward's House
Thorton Lacy
To Portsmouth
Mansfield Park
Mansfield Village
White House
Parsonage
Mansfield Common

of character in addition to his obvious charm; and, above all, that he was genuinely in love—as clearly shown by his *real* courtesy to the Prices. Such a man, we feel, would not have ruined his life by the thoughtless frivolity of seducing Maria without the excuse of passion. For he had sense enough to foresee the consequences, and there was nothing vicious in his nature.

I am personally disposed to believe that Jane Austen intended him for a villain, composed of charm without moral principle; but in developing the character fell a little in love with him herself—as Emma did with Frank Churchill; and consequently indulged him with virtues not becoming the villain: a position to which the conventions—of morality and novel-structure alike—obliged her to drag him back, without quite realizing the inconsistency involved. Whatever explanation may be preferred, neither the man nor the events are quite convincing.

It has been suggested again, that Jane herself cared no more for Fanny than some of her readers. That she intended to illustrate the vast amount of mischief a weak and obstinate woman may accomplish by her power to cling where she is not wanted, and her stubborn refusal to see reason or advantage in any suggestions that *others* may provide. It *may* thus be said of *Mansfield Park* that it was Fanny herself who wrecked at least three lives: Edmund's, Mary's, and Henry's.

In this matter Jane has expressed delight that even her brother could not decide how things would be:

> Henry has this moment said that he likes my *M. P.* better and better; he is in the third volume. I believe *now* he has changed his mind as to foreseeing the end; he said yesterday, at least, that he defied anybody to say whether H. C.[rawford] would be reformed, or would forget Fanny in a fortnight.

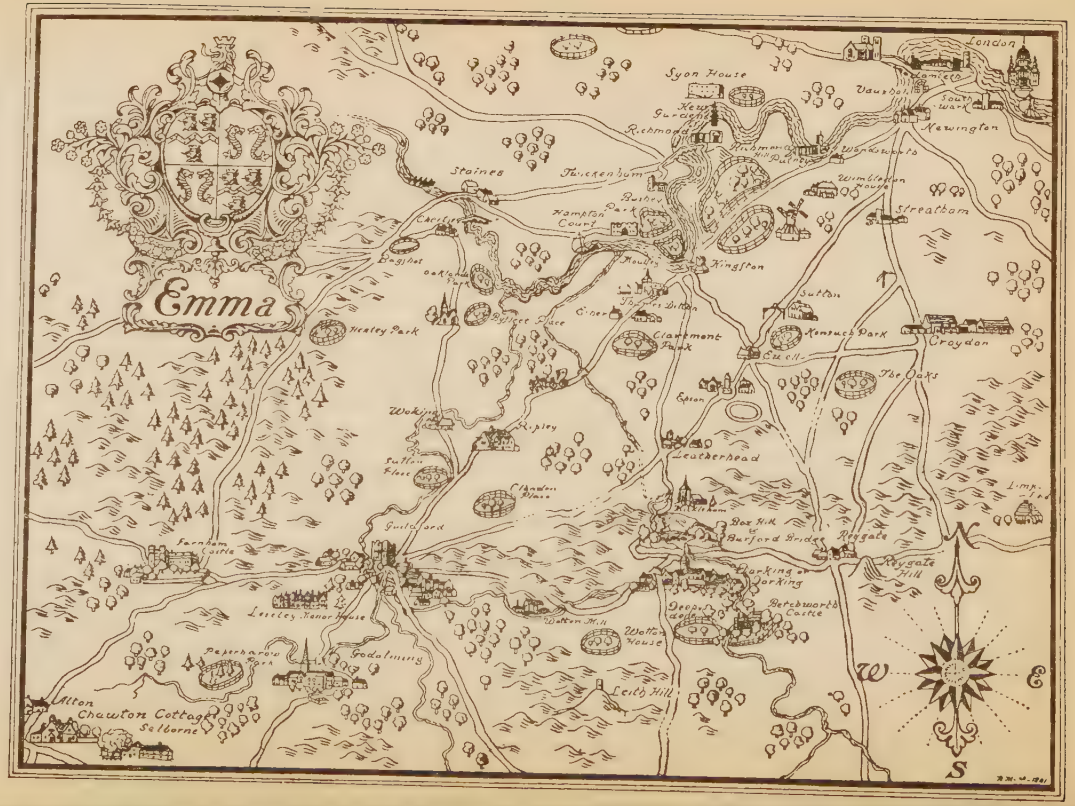
I have found an echo of Miss Larolles's conviction that Mr. Gosport wanted to plague her about Mr. Sawyer

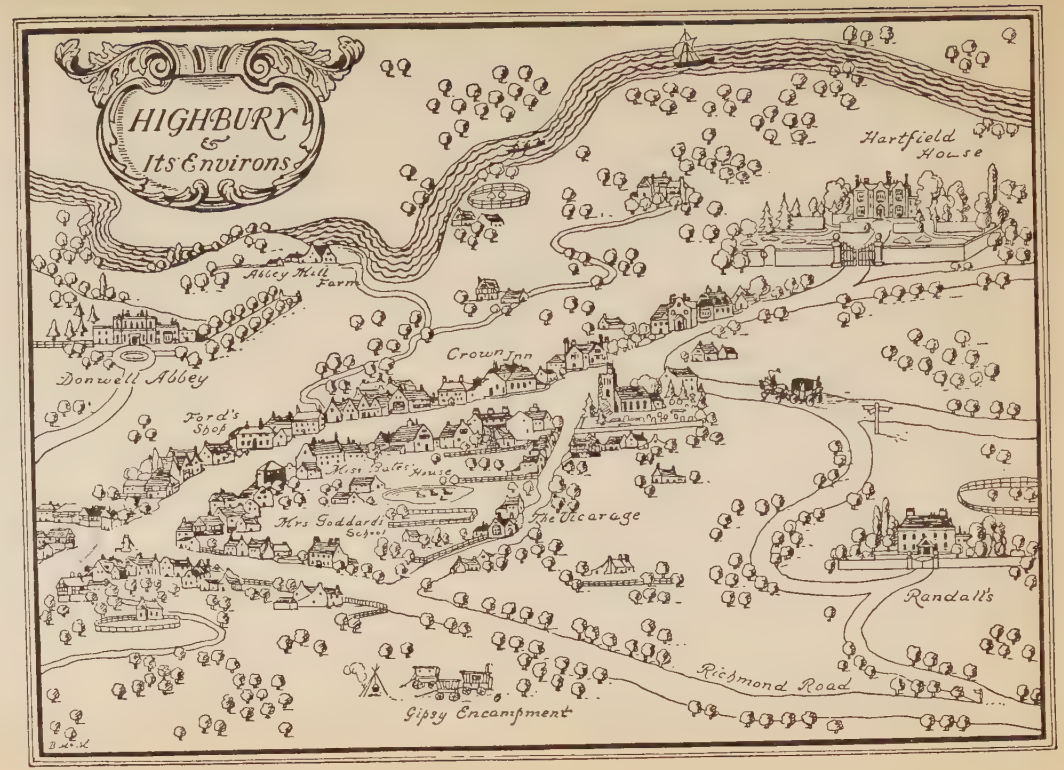
"as nothing else was talked of a month," in Tom Bertram's affected belief that Mary Crawford was "quizzing him and Miss Andrews." [1] Edmund's man-like expressions of sympathy with Fanny, she did not need: "No wonder—you must feel it—you must suffer. How a man who once loved you, could desert you. But yours—your regard was new compared with—Fanny, *think of me*"; resemble, in words and sentiment, a similar request from Mr. Villars to Evelina: "I cannot bear to see thy tears, *for my sake* dry them: such a sight is *too much for me*: *think of that*, Evelina, and take comfort, I pray thee."

If, as I am disposed to believe, *Emma* was developed from *The Watsons*—and to a certain extent, this cannot be disputed, it has a part in both divisions of Jane Austen's work. And though the plot is entirely independent, one considerable part of its foundation must have been suggested by *Cecilia*. Almost everything depends on, or in some degree is influenced by, the folly and imprudence of Emma's friendship for Harriet Smith. Cecilia was too conventional, not sufficiently modern, to think of influencing, or directing, the affections of Henrietta Belfield. But she, too, was greatly attracted by a nature so much simpler, and more foolish, than her own. Her acts of friendship were most decidedly imprudent. While for her part Henrietta also fell in love—humbly and deeply, with the hero, imagining, like Harriet, that he might even learn to love her. And Jane Austen explains, what Fanny Burney clearly assumes, that the heroine never thought of resigning her lover to her friend; or of "resolving to refuse him at once and for ever, without vouchsafing any motive, because he could not marry them both."

[1] Is this, by the way, the insipid friend of Isabella Thorpe? When Mrs. Brinton made a novel from the younger, minor characters in Jane Austen, she arranges for Mr. Bertram to marry Miss Thorpe—and make a success of the match!

College of the Sequoias
Library


Emma
London
Syon House
Richmond
Staines
Twickenham
Hampton Court
Kingston
Wimbledon
Streatham
Mewington
Sutton
Croydon
Claremont
Esher
Leatherhead
Woking
Guildford
Farnham
Godalming
Peperharow
Alton
Chawton Cottage
Selborne
Leith Hill
Dorking
Betchworth Castle
Reigate
Reigate Hill
Burford Bridge
Box Hill
Denbies
Watton House
Watton Hill
Clandon
Sutton Place
Oatlands
Chertsey
Englefield
Healey Park
Kennet
Vauxhall
Wandsworth
Richmond Hill
Kingston Hill
Epsom
The Oaks
Kenley
Limpsfield
W
E
S


HIGHBURY
&
Its Environs
Hartfield House
Abbey Mill Farm
Donwell Abbey
Crown Inn
Ford's Shop
Mrs Goddard's School
The Vicarage
Randall's
Richmond Road
Gipsy Encampment

Frank Churchill and the "Fairfax mystery" belong, as already suggested, to a more modern outlook on life; and, in Miss Burney's eyes, neither "poor Miss Taylor" nor the niece of Miss Bates would have been thought of as ladies; while Frank is a man of the world, contemporary with Henry Crawford: as attractive, but more honourable, or perhaps only more fortunate in his choice. In *Emma*, again, Jane Austen has resumed the eager and spontaneous gaiety of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Collins is, certainly, the first of Jane's immortal bores, but Miss Bates and Mr. Woodhouse stand very near the throne; and George Meredith has said that "Emma and Mr. Elton might walk straight into comedy, were the plot arranged for them." In this story we meet the chief masterpieces, and the largest number of portraits, in Jane Austen's famous Gallery of Comedians: the bores already mentioned — and Miss Bates is also the prima donna of loquacity; Mr. Elton for supreme vanity in the male; Mrs. Elton the personification of vulgarity; and Harriet the sweet fool in petticoats—a creature all eager heart.

It is a miracle of self-control to have given this great company of "stars" each their proper place in an amusing and lively plot, to have kept any one from seizing more than his share of limelight, intruding upon the dialogue, or overshadowing the course of true love.

It was carried down verbally in the family that she had revealed the following facts about *Emma*:

The word swept aside unread by Jane Fairfax was "pardon"; the Knightleys' exclusion from Donwell was ended by the death of Mr. Woodhouse in two years' time.

Some also were told that "Jane Fairfax survived her elevation only nine or ten years. Whether the John

Knightley's afterwards settled at Hartfield or Frank Churchill married again may be legitimate subjects for speculation."

Even Jane herself never again composed a story so completely within one social class, one little set of intimate neighbours sharing, without ambition to rise or temptation to fall, the simple interests of quiet daily life.

This, we should remember, was the last novel actually prepared for publication by Jane Austen, which received her final polishing, revisions, and approval in every word. We are so accustomed to think, with justice, of *Persuasion* as the most mature and, in many respects, the most accomplished of the novels, that we forget the circumstances which denied it an author's care in the last event. Inevitably our knowledge of the revised chapters has encouraged this oversight. Yet only four months before her death, after these chapters had been written, she writes of "something [i.e. *Persuasion*] ready for publication which may, perhaps, appear about a twelvemonth hence."

This clearly means that she had completed a fair copy, largely revised, no doubt, from her first draft, which yet did not completely satisfy her own critical judgment. Being already at work on *Sanditon*, or with plans for the new work in her head, she did not intend at the moment to proceed with *Persuasion*, judging, from former experience, that a year might be expected to give her the time, the power, and the mood.

No stronger evidence of patience, self-control, and the self-infliction of a high standard could be imagined; for which of us would not have been content, nay proud, to see our name on the title-page of *Persuasion*, even had not the revised chapters been supplied! As it happens, however, in this case, we can hazard a guess where Jane would have used the pruning-knife. The light thrown on Mr. Elliot's

Persuasion
Axbridge
Bath
Wells
Stonehenge
Shepton Mallet
Frome
Glastonbury Abbey
Salisbury
Taunton
Stalbridge House
Ilminster
Sherborne
Crewkerne
Chard
Hilbury Stamford
Shaftesbury
Ringwood
Honiton
Axminster
Lyme Regis
Manor House Wintercombe
Colyford
Charmouth
Sidmouth
Exmouth
Bridgeport
Dorchester
Wareham
Poole
Weymouth
Minterborne Monkton
Corfe Castle
W
E
S

KELLYNCH HALL & Its Environs
Kellynch Hall
To Bath
Kellynch Lodge
Uppercross Cottage
Kellynch Village
The Great House
Upper Cross Village
Winthrop Farm
Charmouth
To Lyme Regis
The Inn
Lyme Regis
Pinny
Harville House
The Cobb

shady past, by the reminiscences of Mrs. Smith and Nurse Rooke, is awkwardly contrived. There is no such fault of construction in *Emma*, and Jane Austen would not have given it her final approval in a later work.

It proves, however, what I have always suspected, that the eagerness of Jane Austen's nature, though always disciplined by judgment, was never curbed by trouble or weariness of the flesh. Her critical spirit could not keep pace with the swift flow of thought and pen, once she was thoroughly absorbed in the work; and she would write on of what sped through her excited imagination, even in making a fair copy considerably revised, without waiting for considered judgment of every part. A calmer mood might have saved her some hard labour, but such mental economy was not hers to command.

The change of spirit so marked in many chapters of *Persuasion* may suggest that Jane was a little tired of so much fun, though she confesses "the heroine is almost too good for me"; or may have deeper significance, as evidence of personal sorrow, advancing age, or some kind of physical weakness: as, indeed, we are inclined to imagine she was not altogether unconscious of the approach of death. But courage is here unbroken and *Persuasion* ends on a note of spring, the very voice of youth. For like her own Anne Elliot, Jane "prized the frank, the open-hearted, the eager character beyond all others. Warmth and enthusiasm did captivate her still." And Captain Wentworth is the most high-spirited of all her heroes; gayer and younger in act and word than Darcy, Knightley, Edmund, Edward, or even Henry Tilney, who played schoolmaster in his love. The captain is her true gallant, debonair in service to his lady. For this is the philosophy of Jane, her dream or vision of the ideal; and if Henry Tilney gives us her spring, Anne Elliot reveals her maturity; the gift of serenity in unselfish kindness

to all about her, while the heart is young and still, as always, ready for adventure.

On the other hand, the comparative sobriety of *Persuasion*, as one may call it, is largely due to a new experiment of omitting the conventional start with "lovers' meeting." The young people are introduced to us at a later stage of the acquaintance, when already tested by time and, that they may learn each other's true worth and the realities of love, temporarily estranged by misunderstanding. But there are more significant changes, or evidence of advance, than its minor key and the absence of any comic character part. For the first time Jane Austen has deliberately subordinated brain to heart. This is a tale of feeling and suffering; with the shadow of social degradation and the possibility of a prudent marriage that would banish happiness for ever overhanging the heroine, while the hero is recklessly playing for matrimonial disaster on different lines and for another reason. Two common, and once prevailing, fallacies about Jane Austen are completely refuted in *Persuasion*: that her attitude towards marriage was mercenary, and that she could not write about strong emotions. She says, no doubt, as half a jest, "the conclusion may be bad morality"; and that, I suppose, may explain, or at least excuse, the surprising judgment gravely expounded in two of the earliest reviews, that this "second novel is in every respect a much less fortunate performance" than *Northanger Abbey*[1]; that "its *moral*" should certainly *not* be "numbered amongst its merits."

Here the knowledge gained from, and the feelings excited by, her sailor brothers are again to the fore: the daily intercourse between Mary Musgrave at the cottage and her sisters-in-law at the "Great House" is manifestly delineated from her own home within the boundaries

[1] See pp. 260, 261.

of her brother, the squire's, estate. When, for a moment, reminded of Fanny Burney, she permits Anne to mention Miss Larolles—William Elliot and Mrs. Clay are both worldly and modern.

But *Persuasion* is Jane Austen at the pinnacle of her art, most intimately herself.

CHAPTER IX

THE HEART OF A ROMANTIC

The fundamental distinction between Jane Austen and the realists is, that while they laboriously build up character from analysis and observation, dissecting man's soul for us to see the wheels go round, she creates a living personality, whom she then leaves to be, and speak for, itself. Though it may thus appear that realism penetrates into human nature while she is content with delineating its surface, she, in fact, achieves far greater reality and truth. *Because* it is thus that we see and know each other in life. The most perfect lover cannot tell you *why* he must serve only Her. He neither knows nor cares what made her all she is. It is the charm and beauty of which she is the expression: herself as he sees her—from without, not from within, that enthrones her.

Realism is an intellectual preoccupation; and there is no intention here of depreciating its value or interest. Active minds will always enjoy a discussion on the nature of man, which is a part of education, both exciting and profitable. Psychology, expressed as fiction, is naturally popular in a scientific age; and the chasing of passions to their lair is excellent sport in these days of advanced civilization. But it is not life, which is feeling. The analysis of character is a science, not an art; it does not bring us new friends.

Jane Austen's novels are inhabited by human beings, radiating personality and charm: our very good friends, whom it is delightful to meet, a privilege to know. For this reason, although their manners and many of their ideas are

old-fashioned; though they seldom do anything remarkable, and are reserved about their souls; they belong to all time, welcomed by each new generation. Intellectual matters and characters manufactured by the mind belong to the day in which they were produced, exhibit the fashions in thought of their particular age or generation.

There is, moreover, a subtler realism, which is absolute truth to nature, by which Jane Austen achieves the most profound reality and life. In greater or less degree, though most frequently with almost entire completeness, she assumes a new ego for each novel: the heroine of the occasion, through whose mind and eyes every character, place, and event of the tale is seen and told. There is here no confusion of persons. It is not that she puts her own qualities or notions into the heroine, except when they happen to think or feel alike: but, by force of her dramatic imagination, she herself enters into the personality she has created. There are philosophies which pronounce the material world no more than an illusion, a part of our dream, only existing in our brain; but we are not here concerned with philosophy.

It is a fact that, for each one of us, persons and their characters are just precisely, and no more than, what they seem—not, of course, only to our material eye, but in our thoughts, feelings, and judgment. The world of a novelist who presents his characters as an observer outside the tale may throw new light on nature and man, but his tale is not completely like life. Jane Austen does not achieve this strict truth by any mechanical means, such as "narrative in the first person" where the ego is always present in the flesh, or the more modern, literal thought-translation, invented by Dorothy Richardson, where everything happens in the one mind.

Jane allows herself, if required, the full benefit in wizardry of the novel-art. She moves freely among her people, not

always in company with the heroine; she reads and reveals their thoughts; she uses her own wit in presenting all she has seen and heard: *but* being now herself Catherine Morland, Elizabeth Bennet, or Anne Elliot, it is *their* world she, in turn, sees and presents: a scene interpreted by dainty innocence, sprightly wit, or quiet reflection. Such are the different worlds in which we all live. Such pictures of nature are real and true.

Could we imagine being introduced to Henry Tilney by Emma Woodhouse, we should see at once the secret of Jane's way. In that alien company half his charm would vanish into thin air. Though Emma *learned* to admit her folly, it would never have been "a much simpler operation to *her* to doubt her own judgment than Henry's." To live unspoiled in the odour of incense was *his* peculiar grace: and, though as outsiders, we may say that Tilney and Churchill belong to very much the same type of young men, they are given quite different parts to play.

Jane Austen pursues this method in all her work: permeating each tale with the mood and temperament, the intelligence and outlook, of each heroine in turn. We can thus determine the vexed question of *who* is the heroine in *Sense and Sensibility*. For if interest centres round the emotional adventures of Marianne, it is through Elinor's disapproving, though loving, eyes, we see her folly and her charm. Jane Bennet would never have allowed herself, or us, to detect the weakness of Bingley or the vulgarities at Longbourn, so gaily evident to Elizabeth; and we should not have known how really respectable Sir Thomas Bertram could be without a little of Fanny's grateful humility. Anne's tender sympathy, which is *not* weak, manifestly colours every page of *Persuasion*, though Jane Austen achieved more complete translation in Catherine Morland; as she merged herself most

thoroughly in Emma Woodhouse; by no means characters so closely as others resembling her own.

If Catherine speaks for herself without reserve at every moment of *Northanger Abbey*, Miss Austen yet contrives, by subtleties it is impossible to either analyse or illustrate, to stand at once within and without her charming friend. We are all the time thinking Catherine's thoughts, feeling her emotions, sharing her hopes and fears: yet we feel, too, some mysterious presence, watching unseen at our side, bidding us, though no word is spoken, take careful note of every detail in the picture that we may really understand the character of this silly girl who contrives to be at once so attractive and so quick to learn.

I have already pointed out that, though for certain specific reasons *Emma* may not be our favourite novel, and though it is not the most mature, Jane Austen has here achieved, with most complete and finished technique in every detail, the personal characteristics of her art. In every respect it is the perfect example of her methods, her aims, and her judgment of the novel she always intended, and always nearly contrived, to write. It is here that we find the individuality of her genius most supreme. It is *the* Jane-Austen novel, and its author is Emma Woodhouse. Every word conveys her thoughts, her feelings, and her judgment: wrong-headed and perverse often enough, it may be, but the origin of all our insight, our laughter, and our applause.

For such a story the heroine's name provides the natural title: any other indeed would seem almost impossible to contemplate. On the other hand, when working upon Miss Burney's *Cecilia* and *Camilla*, Jane Austen naturally welcomed the opportunity provided by the concluding "morals" of these tales, of using what we may call subject-titles: though in both cases the idea, as we know, was a

second thought, developed in course of final revision. There is no occasion to dwell upon any reasons it would be easy to put forward for a title so appropriate as *Mansfield Park*, which obviously reflects the atmosphere of the tale, and—as it were—the foundation of its structure.

But I have little doubt that, on their own merits so to speak, Jane would have called both *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, which, after *Emma*, are the two novels most completely told through an ego assumed for the occasion, by the names of their heroines. She did not, in fact, herself determine either of the titles by which they are now known.

The reference to *Northanger Abbey* as *Miss Catherine* (p. 268) is quite certainly her last thought of this story. I conjecture that the original title of *Susan* (also taken from what was then, of course, the heroine's name) was abandoned on recollection of undesirable associations with *Lady Susan*, which might one day see the light, while Susan herself became Catherine in recollection of *Kitty or the Bower*; and no idea of any second change of title occurred to Jane or her family during her lifetime.

On the other hand they were discussing a title for the unnamed *Persuasion*, and among several possible alternatives "the one that seemed most likely to be chosen was 'The Elliots.'"

Now the closing sentence of *The Plan* for a novel which was drawn up about this time, reads thus: "The name of the book not to be *Emma*, but of the same sort as *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*"; that is, by subject —not from the heroine's name.

Since these two novels were about half the length of her earlier tales, they were intended to be published together, and as the one was called *Catherine*, the other could not be "Anne." Readers would think they were buying one full-length novel; named as "Elinor and Marianne" (afterwards

Sense and Sensibility) had been, from the two leading ladies.

It was Henry's instinct as a man of business, when actually negotiating publication of the manuscripts, which prompted the change from "Catherine" to *Northanger Abbey*; and, certainly *Persuasion*, also Henry's invention, long delayed the happiness of Anne Elliot, just as *Pride and Prejudice* had kept Darcy and Elizabeth apart.

Any attempt at a definition or analysis of genius is foredoomed to failure; and genius is the mainspring of Jane Austen's art. But we can investigate the qualities or characteristics of her work, which made her great. The foundations are not difficult to discern, and may be briefly summarized: an almost perfect balance between intellect and emotion, a very intimate and critical knowledge of her craft—or the technique of fiction, including characterization, and the twin gifts of humour and wit.

We have seen how strongly inheritance and the atmosphere of home encouraged in her both thought and feeling; although she exercised her brain before attempting to reveal her heart. The poise, or balance, between the two, acquired in her maturity, was no less marked, we may feel confident, in her person than in her writings. It accentuates the distinction we have just endeavoured to expound, between such novels as *Emma* or *Persuasion* and conscious realism; where fidelity to the elements of human nature takes precedence of Nature herself: the living, composite, human being.

Of the three constituent parts of a novel, the character, the events, and the subject (formerly the moral), realism gives first place to the ideas or opinions to be promulgated—among which vivisection by the pen is easily "the favourite" topic. The romantic, not in the first meaning attached to the word a writer of romances, is concerned first with character as personality, not as statistics of qualities; and

secondly, with the story or events; only using the subject for structure or composition to produce atmosphere and hold the reader's attention. No one with any character at all, enjoys or observes life without some purpose or thought. No novelist of worth or substance composes his story without intention or ideas. But these stand behind, or beneath, the picture; seldom, if ever, appearing as a statement, unless the writer has merely chosen fiction as a frame for philosophy or desires to secure a hearing for his teaching by disguising it as a tale.

The human document, so passionately produced by realism, may, or may not, have a lesson or a message to convey; but the realist is governed absolutely by one abstract idea, the literal and detailed reproduction of what he calls truth; that is, the particles which meet in harmony or discord as a pattern or design to make up a man, each with a pull towards some different act or line of action, each in alternating control, or by combination and compromise directing a straight upward or downward path.

Comparison here is not primarily designed to express preference; but it is necessary, I think, because the foundation of Jane Austen's self-training was to ridicule and avoid, at all cost, the follies and falsities of romance; because she never wrote without thought and disclosed certain, very vigorous and independent, ideas; and, above all, because fidelity to truth and reality were woven into the very texture of her work, conspicuous on every page, and a vital part of her important contribution to the progress and development of the English novel.

Yet her aim was truth rather than accuracy; not photography, but art. She saw and drew life as a picture, composed in story and dramatic in the proportions of its detail; always considering the whole as greater than the parts.

And however flawless her technique, she had no interest

leave the house "one morning for half-an-hour" and Elinor spent much of her time in her sister's bedroom; Mrs. Ferrars "was not a woman of many words"; Lady Middleton "fancied them satirical because they were fond of reading"; Robert Ferrars "did not deserve the compliment of rational" conversation; when Willoughby had "turned away with a slight bow," Marianne "was too miserable to stay a minute longer" at the party; in Sackville Street, while Elinor was watching a man-puppy, "adorned in the first style of fashion, deciding on all the different horrors of the different tooth-pick cases presented to his inspection," Marianne remained "as ignorant of what was passing around her as in her own bedroom." They had been "rather more than two months in town"; but, for all they knew or cared of its customs, its buildings, or its amusements, they might as well have stayed at Barton Cottage; for the whole of their time was given to the discussion of Marianne's, and the disclosure of Elinor's, almost unbearable distresses.

And in a later story, when Miss Austen has acquired complete control over her technique, she refuses herself even so slight a concession. She must, I think, have been sorely tempted by the "party at Astleys" when Miss Smith—who had so recently "hoped she knew better than to think of him," after all accepted Robert Martin—"There was no preventing a laugh. Such an end of the doleful disappointment of five weeks back! Such a heart—such a Harriet!" How Emma could have enjoyed the scene, and we could have enjoyed her enjoyment. But it had happened in London. They could scarcely have been brought together again in Highbury; and Emma must be content with Mr. Knightley's bald account of the simple story, omitting all "the minute particulars which only woman's language can make interesting."

Did Jane, *because she was a woman*, confine herself to miniatures, the little nothings and dear particulars of life, on which our happiness really depends, by which character is most faithfully revealed, in which—at least, save at a crisis of dramatic emotion—we are more interested than in larger issues? "In our communications," said Knightley, "we deal only in the great"; and though at the moment Emma was in the mood to respect a man's greater wisdom, Jane Austen was surely indulging herself in one of her favourite gentle gibes at man's complacent assumption of superiority. It has been noticed that she never anywhere reports a conversation between men where no woman is present; and *this* has been ascribed to humility! It is, however, no more than a particular application of the *principle* just propounded. She had never been in such a situation herself! Such scenes inevitably were outside her own personal experience, therefore not to be attempted.

In *Mansfield Park* it is expressly stated that sin and its consequences, or any scenes of prolonged or intense tragedy, are omitted as a matter of personal taste. She will not dwell on such things, and leaves them to those who can enjoy them. Actually, no doubt, all violence or intensity of emotion are outside her conception of a romance, on artistic grounds also; partly because she believed in happiness and desired it for her friends, partly because the "luxuries of sorrow" were so extravagantly and artificially exhibited in the silly novels she sought to ridicule and to reform.

There are other hints, equally significant, of approval or criticism in the letters to Anna.

> Your Aunt C. does not like desultory novels, and is rather afraid yours will be too much so, that there will be too frequently a change from one set of people to another, and that circumstances will be sometimes introduced of apparent consequence which will lead to nothing.

But a little later:

> You are now collecting your people delightfully, getting them exactly into such a spot as is the delight of my life. Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on, and I hope you will do a great deal more, and make good use of them while they are so favourably arranged.

This precisely describes Jane Austen's own methods, and reveals what an intelligent reader would surmise, that in her, taste and judgment were in close accord. She wrote what she enjoyed writing, and approved it largely because of the pleasure thus derived. It is a genial and benevolent philosophy that can believe happiness the safest guide to judgment, the strongest evidence of good art.

She will not, however, pass the smallest slip, whether of taste or accuracy. Verbal correction is frequent, the most careful instruction is given as to returning visits, paying calls, and proper methods of "introducing" or addressing persons of different ranks, though the affectations of convention are not spared—what you say "about the madness of otherwise sensible women on the subject of their daughter's coming out is worth its weight in gold"—a sentence that recalls Lady Catherine and Tom Bertram.

Characters "must not act inconsistently"; a *prudent* mother, with two daughters, would not settle in a neighbourhood "where she knows nobody but one man of not very good character." An "anxious mother" is "not careful enough of her daughter's health," and Susan "seems to have changed her character." Prosy scenes must be avoided, and "your descriptions are often more minute than will be liked. You give too many particulars of right hand and left": that is, you must not be a realist. One of Anna's heroes is dismissed as "too much in the common novel style—a handsome, amiable young man (such as do not much abound in real life) desperately in love and all

in vain": a satirical conclusion well matched by the remark that "Cecilia continues to be interesting in spite of her being so amiable."

There are, naturally, careful and minute criticisms on style, a demand for purity of language: "Bless my heart is too familiar and inelegant"; and "I wish you would not let Devereux Forester plunge into a 'vortex of dissipation.' I do not object to the thing, but I cannot bear the expression: it is such thorough novel slang, and so old that I dare say Adam met with it in the first novel he opened." To which she adds one useful generalization, unexpectedly illustrated from Fanny Burney: "I do not like a lover speaking in the third person, it is too much like the part of Lord Orville, and *I* think it not natural."

Characters, as we should expect, she either likes, dislikes, or finds dull, speaking of them as real persons like the author's sisters and brothers, never discussing their make-up. Anna was a faithful disciple of Jane's, and did not attempt dissection.

Here, finally, Jane allows us full indulgence in that peculiar sensitiveness to "names," which appears occasionally in other letters, and is evidenced—once we have the clue—by the small variety found in the novels, the repetition of favourites for the agreeable characters and of those she dislikes for villains and vulgarians: "Leslie *is* a noble name": "The name of Rachel is as much as I can bear": "your Aunt C. understands the exquisiteness of that name. Newton Priors is really a nonpareil. Milton would have given his eyes to have thought of it. . . . It is really invaluable. I never met with anything superior to it. It is delightful, and one could live on the name of Newton Priors for a twelvemonth."

We are told, also, that "until the heroine grows up the fun must be imperfect. . . . One does not care for girls until they are grown up."

There were two other story-writers in the family, Edward [1] and Caroline, children of the second Mrs. James; to whom she writes in a spirit of kindly fun that is, nevertheless, not without a hint of genuine criticism. With all a child's delight in gloomy melodrama, Caroline's idea of a tragedy was to kill off all her *dramatis personæ*, preferably by violence, in the last act. When, on one occasion, the elders could not refrain from laughter at the orgy of blood thus produced, she flung her manuscript "into the fire on the spot."

The aunts, naturally, found means to soothe the young author's offended vanity, and the letters from Jane, so greatly treasured in after years, about her next attempts, however playful their affection, show evidence of careful restraint from condescension.

I wish I could finish stories as you can. I am much obliged to you for the sight of Olivia, and think you have done for her very well; but the good-for-nothing father, who was the real author of all her faults and sufferings,[2] should not escape unpunished. I hope *he* hung himself, or took the surname of *Bone*, or underwent some direful penance or other.

I have followed your directions and find your handwriting admirable. If you continue to improve as much as you have done, perhaps I may not be obliged to shut my eyes at all, half a year hence. I have been much entertained by your story of Carolina and her aged father; it made me laugh heartily, and I am particularly glad to find you so much alive upon any topic of such absurdity as the usual description of a heroine's father. You have done it full justice, or, if anything is wanting, it is the information of the venerable old man's having married when only twenty-one and being a father at twenty-two.

I look forward to the four new chapters with pleasure—but how can you like Frederick better than Edgar? You have some eccentric tastes however, I know, as to heroes and heroines.

I like Frederick and Caroline better than I did, but must still prefer Edgar and Julia. Julia is a warm-hearted, ingenuous, natural girl, which I like her for, but I know the word *natural* is no recommendation to you.

[1] The author of the *Memoir*.
[2] Like the "obstinate fathers" in *Love and Freindship*.

These letters run from 1815 to 1817, and we first hear of Edward's work in a letter of September 16, 1816, to Cassandra:

> Edward is writing a novel—we have all heard what he has written —it is extremely clever, written with great ease and spirit; if he can carry it on in the same way it will be a first-rate work, and in a style, I think, to be popular. Pray tell Mary [1] how much I admire it—and tell Caroline I think it is hardly fair upon her and myself to have him take up the novel line.

In the following January, to Caroline:

> Edward makes himself as agreeable as ever, sitting in such a quiet comfortable way, making his delightful little sketches. He read his two chapters to us the first evening—both good, but especially the last, in our opinion. We think it has more of the spirit and entertainment of the early part of his work.

And in December 1816 Jane had written to Edward himself:

> Uncle Henry writes very superior sermons. You and I must try to get hold of one or two, and put them into our novels. It would be a fine help to a volume; and we could make our heroine read it aloud of a Sunday evening, just as well as Isabella Wardour, in the *Antiquary* is made to read the "History of the Hartz Demon," in the ruins of St. Ruth; though, I believe, upon recollection, Lovell is the reader. By the bye, my dear Edward, I am quite concerned for the loss your mother mentions in her letter. Two chapters and a half to be missing is monstrous! It is well that I have not been at Steventon lately, and therefore cannot be suspected of purloining them: two strong twigs and a half towards a nest of my own would have been something. I do not think, however, that any theft of that sort would be really useful to me. What should I do with your strong, manly, spirited sketches, full of variety and glow? How could I possibly join them on to the little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush, as produces little effect, after much labour?

The closing words have come to be regarded as almost the final definition of her new art.

Despite the informality of these amusing and affectionate words of criticism and advice, few writers have given us so

[1] His mother.

full and illuminating a confession of their literary aims and ideals. I am confident, moreover, that here the lightest word is seriously meant. Jane was too fond of her niece, and too much in earnest about novel-writing, for any trifling on such an important subject. It is just because she could enjoy and laugh over the achievement that her execution so perfectly fits the theme. There is no hesitation or doubt of purpose or design. She has an absolutely clear conception of all she desires and intends to achieve; an instinctive knowledge of correct structure and reality of characterization, that will detect failure or the most minute imperfection at a glance. She has so firm a hold of herself and her instrument, that the most painful revision, the most minute readjustment of act or phrase, does not disturb balance or proportion, does not kill the spontaneity and life of the original thought or emotion. Her characters are just as natural; dialogue and narrative flow on with the same ease, swiftness, and apparent simplicity; however often and however freely they may have been polished, finished, and refined.

In her eloquent defence of novels Jane Austen claims that they "have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than any other literary corporation in the world"; and that in them "the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour, are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language."

These are strong words, but not too strong for such work as hers; and convincing proof of her own serious purposes and high standards.

Yet, wherever we look, whatever aspect of Jane's character or work we have under consideration, we are confronted and perplexed by that uncomfortable word "convention"—

Pickering, pinxt. *Greatbatch, sculpt.*

FRONTISPIECE TO "EMMA," 1833

There was no being displeased with such an encourager, for his admiration made him discern a likeness before it was possible.

and all the rules, limitations, and dependence on the commonplace which it implies. To a large extent she did undoubtedly conform and submit in conduct and conversation. A churchwoman, as we have seen, respecting the spirit of evangelicals, but deploring their somewhat intrusive zeal: a conservative, so far as politics came under her notice, who accepted "the squire and all his relations"; a supporter of propriety in every form, to the extent of suffering interruption of her work and the endurance of bores. As rector's daughter she did "duty," such as women will, in the parish, and visited the poor without urging them to divine discontent; she paid and received calls, without lamenting the wasted hours; she respected her father and mother, entrusted business and "affairs" to her brothers, shared the domestic round with her sister, put herself out to amuse her nephews and nieces. Well aware of women's superiority of sympathetic intelligence, of instinct and understanding, she neither jostled with men on platforms or raided their pedestal in the home. Although the foundations of her art were laid in criticism of her predecessors, she never stepped outside the narrow confines of a simple domestic love-story, as conducted by the usual "principal" and subsidiary character-types, kept strictly within the rules of a nice respectability.

Yet no woman surely ever pursued her own way with such gay and genial serenity, and apparently free from domestic friction; thinking her own thoughts about everything and everybody, unmoved by their opinions, undisturbed by their stupidity. And no writer ever stamped her own personality so firmly upon all she wrote; evolved a style so unmistakably her own; and created so many persons from laughter or from love, completely original, entirely natural, and for ever alive.

In these days of a hundred creeds and the general

confusion of moral doctrine, few realize that the mental rest bestowed upon us by conformity is a strong encouragement to independent thought, judgment, and action—in relation to particular events or special cases. The conscience which examines itself and determines its own regulations has so high a sense of its responsibilities that it seldom sleeps and almost inevitably becomes tyrannical. The conformer, not wearing down his mind and his emotions by discussion of first principles, is free to determine, and not afraid to act, by instinct or impulse towards himself or others on the occasion before him. Without talking about his convictions he lives by their control, more practically and fervently than under the canons of his church. On essential, that is individual, matters, Jane Austen did not follow convention, except where her judgment approved. And she conformed on many matters—since her day noisily condemned—with which she did not feel any personal concern. Where opinions or feelings are expressed their strength and courage is unmistakable: and without question, they are her own —not applications of dogma repeated in blindness or formality.

She may have wondered, as we wonder, whether she could have done any other kind of work; it is possible that had she lived longer the experiment might have been made—whether successfully or not. The fragment (known as *Sanditon*) on which she was engaged at her death was clearly to have been developed on familiar lines; and to us there seems such perfect fitness between Jane and her art, each expressing or revealing the other so completely, that we are not tempted to any prolonged or serious speculation.

There is scope for infinite variety within the formula she has chosen; because it covers that part of life which is universal, or common to all, and every man has his own story. There is no limit to the variety of human nature.

The novelist, bestowing pleasure which is the function of art, exists to create character and tell a story, adding thus to the number of our most intimate and beloved friends, widening our knowledge of life. If only the persons of the tale be natural and real, that we may believe in their humanity, and never doubt or question all they do and say, being convinced they were as their creator made them; unconscious, and if reason tells us, not believing, that, in fact, he has spoken and acted on their behalf—that it is all his invention. In a stupid, literal sense, this may be true, but those whom genius has created cannot die; could never have been other than we know them, will be for ever our chosen comrades and fellow-creatures. They are more real to us because we see further into their hearts than many of our acquaintance; far more real, of course, than the flesh and blood characters of history.

Jane Austen does not take us out of ourselves by heroic adventure or dramatic emotion; she might be called resolutely commonplace—that is, in character and events. It is only by careful comparison with other fiction that we can *fully* realize the self-control she imposed on herself: resisting every conceivable ornament of coloured phrase; every excitement, mystery, or passion; every problem of ethics or tragedy of existence; all commerce, finance, and politics; all learning, philosophy, and art.

Thus expressed, we may well ask what is left: only to find everything fundamental to human nature, happiness, experience, and good conduct: the whole of character on which others depend. For these grow out of our daily habits, the thought and feeling governing our personal relations to each other: more real, because more familiar, than any abstract theories of the universe, any excursions into the abnormal or the unknown.

Yet her methods have no relation to photography, to

records, reports, or statistics. She makes a picture of truth, composing it with a proportion and balance that reveals more than the disorderly panorama of real life, where we never know the conclusion till all is over, and frequently miss the significance or the direction as we stumble on. Her kindly understanding, her affection for individuals, and her faith in human nature, bade her paint in sunlight, bringing out the best in every man, save those directly hostile to happiness—shams or hypocrites, mean spirits, the cruel, and those tainted by selfish vice.

But such feelings, however excellent and endearing, do not themselves make literature; Jane Austen's brain was as well, and fortunately, endowed as her heart. Genius was added to her. Whatever we have said, or might say, of inheritance, training, home atmosphere, and the stimulating example—to emulate or avoid—of her fellow-craftsmen, is as nothing beside her gifts of style, humour, and wit. There is a paradox of genius no man can understand or explain—that what appears most spontaneous, and in fact remains always instinctive and natural, is yet the result of care and thought, selection and effort, polish and revision. Jane Austen's confident economy of words, the swift easy flow of her sentences, the dramatic colloquialism of her dialogue, the sharp sparkle of her wit, the delicious absurdity and revealing subtleties of her humour have been, as it were, continually turned over and tasted before discovery of the final, perfect, form: whether the work were done on paper or in the mind. But concealment of the process is essential to success, and nothing is finished until the inevitable right expression has been found which, being the absolute mirror of thought, must seem spontaneous and unlaboured because natural and true to nature.

We have, fortunately, three examples of work, unfinished for different reasons and in different ways, from which the

impulse and the discipline can be clearly discovered. *Love and Freindship* is not only youthful, and, in many ways, immature; but was never intended for publication and, for that reason, no *work* was put into it beyond what gave pleasure to Jane herself, and would delight her family, or what belonged to the mood of the moment. It is wholly playful and intellectual, for feeling was a serious thing to Jane Austen. We find here many flashes of wit and humour, many a happily turned phrase and hint of character, some racy dialogue and occasional dramatic moments: much, in fact, which no one else could have written and that might, with but slight trimming, have been used in a novel for publication. As burlesque, which is entirely derivative, she has done nothing better, the characters of Lady Greville and Ann Parker are finished sketch-miniatures, and some of the *Letters*, considered singly, could hardly be improved. But she has taken no pains with proportion or construction: the composition as a whole is careless; it has no humanity. It lives, however, by its high spirits and amazing vitality.

Sanditon is not a fragment, but the beginning of a précis; the preliminary shorthand notes, in which Jane Austen began to jot down her ideas and lay out her plan: possibly a method she had always adopted, as we may conjecture, entirely without evidence, from the various stages described merely as "revision," which we are told were produced of the earlier novels.

Here again there are flashes of Jane Austen at her best, as, of course, with her powers it is natural, if not inevitable, that an idea should sometimes have arisen spontaneously in a finished phrase. But there is no attempt, less even than in *Love and Freindship*, at any orderly movement of words. Precision and conciseness are conveyed in jerks; emphasis by italics and capital letters; rapidity by a kind of telegraphic language, in defiance of grammar. There are merely

casual hints for characterization; rough notes for scenes and events; stray remarks introduced without any *apparent* object. The lack of plot and vagueness of characterization, however, is not due to the *nature* of the work; but to the fact of its being unfinished. When completed we should have known all that Jane meant to tell; but very little about her way of telling it. Mrs. Sanders, granddaughter of Admiral James, and owner of *Love and Freindship*, says she remembers her father telling her he had read that Jane intended to call this story "The Brothers." [1]

The cancelled chapter (originally chapter x of the second volume, rewritten as chapters x and xi or 22 and 23 in modern editions; the last chapter, xii or 24, being unchanged) of *Persuasion* is a vastly different matter. Here the whole story had been written, revised, and was ready for press. It is improbable that the most astute critic would have found anything to condemn; but herein stood the dénouement of the whole tale, the scene to which everything had been worked up, the final and permanent understanding between hero and heroine. And Jane had not satisfied herself: she thought the passage tame and flat; and, after a night's rest to conquer her depression, boldly rejected the greater part, and wrote two new chapters, almost entirely different, in its place. These contain the conversation between Anne and Captain Harville on the fidelity of women (of outstanding importance to the tale *and* to our interpretation of Jane Austen herself), as well as the Musgroves' sudden appearance at Bath and all the lively chatter and bustle in the White Hart Hotel. This, of course, means far more than revision. Hard work, carefully thought-out grouping, and vigorous imagination have been evoked for a new setting at once more artistic and dramatic. The depth and intensity of emotion is far greater, now that the principles are alone

[1] *Times Literary Supplement*, February 19, 1928.

in a crowd; Wentworth's own impulsive eagerness, on fire at a hint, read behind his lady's words, is far more natural and becoming a hero than the awkward approach originally forced on him by Admiral Croft; and the whole difficulty of explanations gallantly turned to a most chivalrous compliment, has been triumphantly overcome; given its proper pre-eminence of dramatic effect, by towering over the petty affairs of William Elliot and Mrs. Clay, Louisa and Benwick, Henrietta and Haytor, Mary and Charles Musgrove, the condescension of Elizabeth. To have raised her climax by surrounding it with so many characteristic sidelights is, indeed, a triumph of art, and we have seldom found Jane more brilliant and high-spirited. Her new version supplied the note of confident happiness and love, superior to all the pettiness of weak characters and tiresome acquaintance; the tonic needed to brace up the minor key of earlier chapters.

It is a fine lesson in art, revealing a will to work at once daring and patient, a profound and unsleeping instinct for dramatic effect, an intimate knowledge of values and proportion, and the power to command detail in form: the last, final, polish to perfect.

Here, too, we find Jane Austen in her work, the high spirits and courageous impulse that years or sorrow could not dim; the ready and kindly laughter at the absurdities of life; the love for all that was real and generous in human nature: always regulated and controlled by intellectual power and moral poise—a governing instinct of reason, taste, and common sense.

CHAPTER X

THE COTTAGE

One of the younger nieces, Caroline Austen, has left us a simple record of "life at Chawton," which goes far to help us reconstruct the characters and the scene:

> She always wore a cap. My aunts were particularly neat: they held all untidy ways in great dis-esteem. Aunt Jane began the day with music, for which I conclude she had a natural taste, as she thus kept it up, though she had no one to teach and was never induced to play in company, and none of her family cared much for it.
>
> At 9 o'clock she made breakfast—that was her part of the household work. The tea and sugar stores were under her charge—and the wine. Aunt Cassandra did all the rest. . . .
>
> I don't believe Aunt Jane observed any particular method in parcelling out her day, but I think she generally sat in the drawing-room till luncheon, when visitors were there, chiefly at work. She was fond of work, and was a great adept at overcast and satin stitch—the peculiar delight of that day. She was wonderfully successful with cup and ball, and found a resource sometimes in that simple game when she was suffering from weak eyes and could not work or read for long together. After luncheon my aunts usually walked out: sometimes they went to Alton for shopping, often, one or other of them to the "Great House" in order, when a brother was inhabiting it, to make a visit, or if the house were standing empty, they liked to stroll about the grounds . . . and, sometimes, but that was rarely, to call on a neighbour. . . .
>
> My aunt must have spent much time in writing. Her desk lived in the drawing room; I often saw her writing letters on it, and I believe she wrote much of her novels in the same way, sitting with her family when they were quite alone.

We should realize, however, that this applies only to the normal, everyday, course of existence, when the three ladies

were practically alone; and while her family agree that these were, on the whole, the happiest years of her life; they were so, to a large extent, through the gaieties revived for, and shared with, the children of earlier years now recently or about to attain the dignity of coming out.

Though the shadow of death had partially broken up the complete family circle, and the loss of some particularly dear to her had inevitably increased the normal change of the passing years from the impetuous high spirits and laughter of youth; there was a great deal of quiet happiness in the continued close intimacy and even fuller understanding between those who remained about her, to which the opening characters and loving admiration of the younger generation would impart new life.

And if the little circle of Mrs. Austen and her two daughters may seem to offer at first glance an even more limited atmosphere than she had known at Steventon, we must recall that at least three of the brothers, with their own home circles, were in easy reach of the cottage; Frank was on the whole more often ashore than at the earlier stages of his career, and, for the first time, they met and learned to know the wife whom Charles had married in distant lands. Edward, moreover, was the most hospitable of men, always eager to have young people about him; and it was not only that there were parties and balls when he came to Chawton. Long visits to Godmersham were a regular part, as it were, of the sisters' lives.

But above all we suspect Jane was happy in the deepest sense within herself; because for many hours or even days, without reproaching herself for the selfish disregard of others, she could devote herself to her work. The years had brought her, through the underlying development of mind and character from experience, a renewed confidence in her powers, and even stronger determination to exercise

them for her own pleasure and the pleasure of the world. However she shrank from personal intrusion into public notice, and any formal recognition as an author, I am convinced that she had no desire for privacy with regard to the work itself. She wished and intended the public to read her novels; however much the discouragement of a cold and blind reception at the first may have tempted her to doubt how soon their merits would be discovered.

And it was not long now before the turn of the tide. Once *Sense and Sensibility* had been accepted by a more discerning publisher, and received with a degree of kindness [1] which to-day indeed we should dismiss as most inadequate faint praise, there was clearly no longer the slightest hesitation in devoting her full energies to continuous revision and invention, at heart free from diffidence or doubt. Now, at any rate, we find the frankest and most unreserved delight in the children of her brain, the characters she had created, whom she knew and loved so well. If not always certain how far even her own family will fully appreciate the heroine of the moment, she does not hesitate to reveal how keenly she wishes for their approval, and is always in a hurry for it to be forthcoming. Sympathetic criticism, in the form of intelligent reviews, was not then so established as it is to-day; and she judges public opinion mainly by sales, which, for all our air of superiority to best-sellers, are not a test to be altogether despised.

This, of course, would not at that time or, we fear, for some years to come, have been influenced by the disclosure of her authorship; and in September 1813, when *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* were both before the public, she still writes of her regret at the "warmth of Henry's brotherly vanity and love," which could not resist disclosing

[1] See the earliest review below, p. 254.

the authorship of *Pride and Prejudice* to some casual friends who were full of its praise:

> A thing once set going in that way, one knows how it spreads, and he, dear creature, has set it going so much more than once. I know it is all done from affection and partiality, but at the same time let me here again express to you and Mary[1] my sense of the *superior* kindness which you have shown on the occasion in doing what I wished.

There is a preposterous tale, which only needs stating to expose its falsity, of Jane Austen arranging with one of her family to lead the conversation of a visitor to the novels, *while she herself hid behind a curtain* (!) to listen to his unbiassed opinion. Though more lucky than most eavesdroppers, it is stated that she was at first delighted by some honest praise; but when the visitor proceeded to cast some reflection upon the moral tendencies of the novels, she burst out with indignant denials. It is hardly possible to imagine anything less like everything we know of Jane, than this disgraceful libel upon a frank and high-minded lady; and as the narrator, Dame Ethel Smyth, was writing in 1919 of *Impressions that Remained* from her childhood, and reports this as a tale then told, or recalled, by an aged relative, we can repudiate it without hesitation. Miss Mary Augusta Austen-Leigh is gently severe: we are prepared to be indignant.

But she would not allow herself any affectations of modesty, and most charitably concludes: "I am trying to harden myself. After all, what a trifle it is, in all its bearings, to the really important part of one's existence, even in this world." By November of the same year she is submitting, with good grace, to a mild experience of playing the lion, and can laughingly hope for "more of such sweet flattery" from that "excellent kind friend," Miss Sharp:

> "I do not despair of having my picture in the academy at last—all white and red, with my head on one side. Or perhaps I may marry

[1] Frank and his wife.

young Mr. D'Arblay." She quotes a statement from Lady Kew that her work was "universally admired in Edinburgh by the *wise* ones."

Only a spirit at peace with itself and believing in itself could have carried through the achievement of these last few years—in the midst of a busy and sociable existence, which included care of an invalid mother, courtesy to a considerable number of neighbours and friends, some interruptions from illness and business worries of other members of her family, and the continuous claims upon her time and attention which the swarms of young people were bound to demand, and were never refused, from a favourite aunt. But it was natural for her to be happy and busy: we cannot doubt that such distractions were more stimulating than depressing, because they kept up that cheerful outlook on life and affectionate faith in human nature, which she desired to present and did, in fact, impart to all her work. This is the keynote, both of her nature and her art.

Her publisher, in his anxiety to push the first work of a new writer who seems to have inspired him with some confidence, made somewhat strange efforts to escape being extinguished by anonymity. *Sense and Sensibility* is first announced as "a novel by Lady ——"; in less than a month it has become "an extraordinary novel by Lady ——"; and within a further three weeks "an interesting novel by Lady A." The inversion of "a Lady" to "Lady A" is, to say the least, ingenious; and I should imagine a unique method of approach to the natural snobbishness of the general reader.

We have no evidence of how widely the possible authorship of this novel and its successor was discussed, though no doubt it never became a general topic of conversation to be compared with the secret behind the magic word *Waverley*. In the "opinion of friends," collected by Jane Austen herself, however, we read: "Miss Poole said no books had

ever occasioned so much canvassing and doubt, and that everybody was desirous to attribute them to some of their friends, or to some person of whom they thought highly." And it is recorded that, at any rate in two circles—which may have touched each other through some common acquaintance—they were actually attributed to another lady.

On November 10, 1813, Miss Mitford wrote, as she was continually writing, to her distinguished friend, Sir William Elford:

"Pray, is not your neighbour, Lady Boringdon, an authoress? I have heard two novels in high repute (but which I have not read), *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, attributed to her."

Over the date October 31, 1814, Lord Broughton relates, in his *Recollections of a Long Life* (not published till 1909):

"Lord and Lady Boringdon came late at night. My lady is suspected of having written the two novels, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Sense and Sensibility*. She is clever and plays with grace at billiards."

This is a year before John Parker, second Baron Boringdon of Saltram, near Plymouth, became the Earl of Morley. He was the friend of the chief statesmen of the period, and Frances, his second wife, is said to have been "one of the most accomplished ladies of the day."

As it happens, we know that the Countess herself was one of the comparatively small circle to whom the real authorship had been confided—possibly, of course, in consequence of the rumour which she herself no doubt desired authority to contradict. Her spontaneous praise of *Emma*, and the value Jane Austen clearly attached to her opinion, are both on record, and prove that the Countess had soon made herself familiar with all the novels to date.

Lady Morley to Miss J. Austen

Saltram: (December 27, 1815.)

MADAM,—I have been most anxiously waiting for an introduction to "Emma," and am infinitely obliged to you for your kind recollection of me, which will procure me the pleasure of her acquaintance some days sooner than I should otherwise have had it. I am already become intimate with the Woodhouse family, and feel that they will not amuse and interest me less than the Bennets, Bertrams, Norrises, and all their admirable predecessors. I can give them no higher praise.

I am, Madam, your much obliged

F. MORLEY.

Miss J. Austen to the Countess of Morley

MADAM,—Accept my thanks for the honour of your note, and for your kind disposition in favour of "Emma." In my present state of doubt as to her reception in the world, it is particularly gratifying to me to receive so early an assurance of your Ladyship's approbation. It encourages me to depend on the same share of general good opinion which "Emma's" predecessors have experienced and to believe that I have not yet, as almost every writer of fancy does sooner or later, overwritten myself.

I am, Madam,

Your obliged and faithful servant,

J. AUSTEN.

December 31, 1815.

Though even the younger nieces and nephews were not at first let into the secret, the novels were mostly read, in proof, by the grown-ups, and read aloud to those actually in the cottage at the time. It is characteristic of Mrs. Austen that, though at this time over seventy, she read the story so quickly, and "did not make the characters speak as they ought," while following and appreciating every point herself, so that Jane feared it must have been difficult for her hearers to do so. We are not surprised to learn from Jane that her mother "thought Fanny Price insipid." It is the eager temperament, surviving till death, which Jane inherited, and also preserved throughout her life.

The old lady, though we do not imagine in any respect tyrannizing her daughters, was always a forceful personality

in any society, and had a way of making up her mind and carrying through whatever had been determined, regardless of any one's protest or comment. In 1812, for example, she announced her wish of revisiting, before it was too late, the scenes in which nearly all her married life had been spent; and, accordingly, went to stay with her son James at Steventon, which was to be the last visit she ever paid to any place. And though she lived for another sixteen years, she never slept out of the cottage at Chawton. At the last, apparently, she felt that so prolonged an existence was scarcely convenient or becoming: "Ah, my dear," she said to one of the grandchildren, "you find me just where you left me—on the sofa. I sometimes think that God Almighty must have forgotten me; but I dare say He will come for me in His own good time": a downright statement of cheerful philosophy that fitly concludes everything we know of the speaker, and may be recommended to all who have passed their allotted span.

The ladies of the cottage were mostly occupied with such domestic or parish duties as had become so entirely a matter of course to all, that we may feel sure the possibility of a more varied existence never crossed their mind to be desired or to provoke discontent.

At this period we have a first-hand description of Jane's appearance from one who could observe and is, obviously, only intent upon the accurate truth: "The figure tall and slight, but not drooping; well-balanced, as was proved by her quick firm step. Her complexion of that rare sort which seems the particular property of light brunettes, a mottled skin, not fair, but perfectly clear and healthy; the fine naturally curling hair, neither light nor dark; the bright, hazel eyes to match, and the rather small, but well-shaped nose." Jane herself reports the comment of a casual acquaintance: "'A pleasing-looking young woman'—that

must do; one cannot pretend to anything better now; thankful to have it continued a few years longer"; but, though in those days ladies *were* considered as past their bloom at thirty-six, we should not accept this, or somewhat similar confessions of the period, as, in any serious sense, reflecting regret or resignation at the encroachments of age.

How keenly she gave herself, as she always had, to the observation and study of others, no student of the novels can fail to know; but it was not in the cold or quizzing spirit of a superior outsider; rather because she was still eager to enter into the lives of every one about her, whether wider or more restricted than her own; still able to laugh or weep with them in full understanding of their mood. As we have noticed from the first, her family and the whole Austen clan were inevitably to a great extent sufficient unto themselves, not at all dependent, for interest or amusement, upon new acquaintance, and may very probably on occasion have seemed to *some* a little exclusive in their intimacies. They could scarcely avoid the appearance of knowing themselves more than ordinarily gifted. Yet we are expressly told that "Jane was, in fact, one of the last people in society to be afraid of. I do not suppose she ever in her life said a sharp thing. She was naturally shy and not given to talk much in company, and people fancied, knowing that she was clever, that she was on the watch for good material for books from their conversation. Her intimate friends knew how groundless was the apprehension, and that it wronged her."

It was much the same with Fanny Burney. She, too, was the most shy, and most observant, of a lively and clever family; at least until her natural character and manners had been a little spoiled by flattery, not always conspicuous for its good taste.

Yet the statement that Jane never "said a sharp thing in

Chawton Cottage

her life" must startle those familiar with her letters, and is hardly borne out by many passages of the novels. It can only refer to, as indeed it was presumably only meant to describe, her conversation and bearing in general company. There is real annoyance, not quite free from bitterness, in certain phrases to Cassandra; and Mr. Hubback tells me that one of her nieces destroyed the letters she had received from "Aunt Jane" during the last few years of her life, largely because she feared that at least to outsiders they would appear somewhat ill-natured and discontented. From one view I feel disposed to welcome such evidence of human weakness; for, like Jane herself, I abhor "pictures of perfection." I do not want to think of her as perfect and unreal. She must, occasionally, have been provoked by other people's stupidity or meanness; jealous of comforts or success secured to graceless fools or knaves; possessed of longings for something she did not possess. And when troubles came, as they did for those she loved in the last years, that indomitable self-control that kept her work so sane and balanced, that delicate balance between heart and brain that gave the equable and vigorous expression to both, in the novels *and* in her life, must have sorely tried a physique always fragile despite its bloom, and worn down before its time by the fire and energy within. We should not, I think, have misjudged the outbreaks; but *then* her own people could not know that we should pass judgment upon her with a respect and love as intimate and understanding as their own: that we should care as much for the whole, uncensured, truth.

There is no slackening, indeed, in the old dear familiar nonsense of the earlier letters up to the last; scarcely indeed so deep and prevailing a change of tone as we detect in *Persuasion*.

She hopes to "secure a good sale of her second edition" by "dining upon goose," while a friend "eat a great deal of

butter"; indulges in a rather far-fetched pun in the conclusion that "there has been one infallible Pope in the world," because "whatever is" really "is best"; and gaily develops the family joke about her fancy for Crabbe: "No; I have only just seen the death of Mrs. Crabbe. I have only just been making out from one of his prefaces that he probably was married. It is almost ridiculous. Poor woman! I will comfort *him* as well as I can, but I do not undertake to be good to her children. She had better not leave any."

She "expects great pleasure" from a party to which "above eighty people are invited," and can equally enjoy "having five tables, eight and twenty chairs, and two fires all to herself"; or "a little water-party" and playing at "bilbocatch, spillikins, paper ships, riddles, conundrums and cards."

The "exquisite weather" may be too good to agree with her mother, but "*I* enjoy it all over me, from top to toe, from right to left, longitudinally, perpendicularly, diagonally, and I cannot but selfishly hope we are to have it last till Christmas — nice, unwholesome, unseasonable, relaxing, close, muggy, weather."

A chance allusion of Cassandra's to the doctor attending Henry during an illness, that was for a time extremely grave, calls forth a very comedy of protest, that is in her best early manner:

> You seem to be under a mistake as to Mr. Haden. You call him an apothecary. He is no apothecary, he has never been an apothecary; there is not an apothecary in this neighbourhood [1]—the only inconvenience of the situation, perhaps—but so it is; we have not a medical man within reach. He is a Haden, nothing but a Haden, a sort of wonderful nondescript creature on two legs, something between a man and an angel, but without the least spice of an apothecary. He is, perhaps, the only person *not* an apothecary hereabouts. He

[1] Which was Hans Place, Chelsea.

has never sung to us. He will not sing without a pianoforte accompaniment.

That she had not forgotten her delight in the absurdities of romance is seen in the burlesque *Plan of a Novel* (p. 205 seq.), written in 1816, and provoked by Mr. Clarke's endeavours to persuade her to write a serious novel.

However carefully we study such of Jane Austen's letters as have been preserved, with the many important and, in the end, fairly detailed records of fact given us by different members of her family; despite the loyal and loving pilgrimages over her homes and haunts by Oscar Fay Adams and Miss Constance Hill; and notwithstanding, finally, the thoughtful estimates and conclusions of master-criticism which those most accomplished in literature have been moved to pronounce; the actual story of her life remains shadowy and dim. We have now the outline of events almost completely filled, where and when particular events took place, something helpful of her family and friends, very valuable records of her work, a fair volume of her comments on occasional daily events and rare moments of feeling or emotion intimately revealed. We have interesting impressions of her personality, habits, and appearance from a few who knew her, and many who were in close touch with them.

But there is no material for the continuous vivid narrative of a life that was superficially uneventful; and no real knowledge, save in general terms, of even her individual feelings towards her parents and brothers, or of the reactions from their experience to hers that would afford reliable judgment, required for a true picture of any crisis from death, from absence or reunion after absence, which might serve as landmarks in the development of her character or the widening of her experience. We can, with some assurance, interpret the links with Cassandra, but these are permanent and unchanging, an integral part of

the foundation, not marking any points in change or growth. Of love, as it directly touched or changed her, we can claim no more than conjecture.

She seldom, if ever, expressed seriously or in definite phrase any general opinions or theories on life, even any judgments on literature; although the once accepted deduction of indifference towards principle and incapacity for deep emotion is now recognized to have been absolutely false. These we can now, with little fear of error, deduce from all we have been told and all she put, however quietly, in her work. Her personality has come to life for us, and it is now so real, so human, so deeply lovable, and so full of charm in its benevolent and courageous gaiety or high spirits, that we welcome and value every detail of information, however isolated in itself.

Therefore, finally, we may be grateful there is so much to know; though it can only be presented as conclusions, or convictions deduced from separate facts, not told in living drama as she has told us of her Elizabeth and her Anne.

At Chawton, then, we find Jane Austen once more happily at home, resuming the simple habits of a quiet life, very similar to the early days of Steventon. There are gaps to shadow the picture, enlivened, however, by new interests; a full experience of daily sorrows and joys to mellow the first springtime emotions of youth; and a more absorbing concentration upon the underlying inspiration of her inmost self, which is still an entertainment of surpassing delight, but now also, or at least more constantly and overpoweringly than before, a serious object of laborious thought, since the dream of creation has become reality and the dear children of her imagination have veritably come to life.

It is the same, and yet another Jane, older in mind and yet as young in spirit; equally gay and overflowing with invention, though more strict and accomplished in tech-

nique; again exceptionally happy compared with many men or women of genius, in part from her own serenity and balance; and very fortunate also, for her particular aims and needs, in her circumstances and friends.

It is hard to face the early closing of a life so settled in tranquil activity, so clearly capable of long-continued happiness for herself and others. And yet, perhaps, we may be glad to think that her keen vitality and alertness of mind held out to the end. The final chapters of *Persuasion* were, assuredly, written in the very shadow of death; although a new story (now called *Sanditon*) had been fully planned, and actually sketched, or drafted, so far as would have occupied about one volume of the three in which it would, at that time, have been issued. Mr. Chapman tells us that though neatly and clearly written, the manuscript "contains a very large number of erasures and interlineations": not, as he no doubt rightly concludes, such revisions as would be made for a fair copy, but the improvements or second thoughts occurring to her quick and well-trained mind as she wrote: evidence, if more were needed, of the high standards she always demanded from herself; and significant considering the state of her health, and the probability of pain and suffering subdued.

She was no less courageously herself to the last in maintaining an eager interest in all around her, expressed in letters it cannot have been an *easy* task to write; and, even when she could scarcely have had any doubt that all would soon be over, she could smilingly threaten Dr. Lyford that, should he fail to cure her, she "would draw up a memorial and lay it before the dean and chapter, and had no doubt of redress from that pious, learned, and disinterested body": brave, light words in no way inconsistent with serious religious thought and preparations for death.

The cause of death is given as a "decline," which

seems unnatural or premature at just over forty; and can only, perhaps, be explained by the inner strain or high pressure at which she had forced herself to live. In the spirit of prophecy after an event, the authors of the *Life and Letters* speak of failing health during the whole of the last year, but it is not certain that, at the time, any one, unless possibly Cassandra, took a serious view of her condition till the middle, or later months, of 1816. They were paying visits, separately or together, Jane was busy at her work, full of other people's worries, and writing to all and sundry well into the first month of 1817; though the beginning of *Sanditon* in January, and its continuation till March, was a conquest of mind over body that those about her must have watched with grave anxiety; and, though possibly a distraction from pain, it may well have hastened the end.

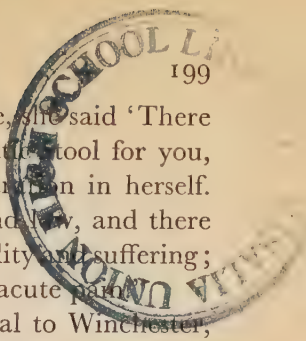
By February the letters contain more or less regular reports of her condition, clearly visaging a consciousness of its increasing gravity. At the end of the month she made her will; leaving:

"To my dearest sister Cassandra Elizabeth, everything of which I may die possessed, or which may hereafter be due to me, subject to the payment of my funeral expenses, and to a legacy of £50 to my brother Henry and £50 to Madame Bigeon." [1]

By April she apologizes for "being coddled, but a weak body must excuse weak nerves"; and about this time Caroline Austen wrote a pathetic account of her last visit with her sister Anna to Aunt Jane:

"She was then keeping her room, but said she would see us, and we went up to her. She was in her dressing-gown, and was sitting quite like an invalid in an arm-chair, but she got up and kindly greeted us, and then, pointing to seats

[1] A family dependant who may have lost money in Henry's bankruptcy.



which had been arranged for us by the fire, she said 'There is a chair for the married lady, and a little stool for you, Caroline. . . .' I was struck by the alteration in herself. She was very pale, her voice was weak and low, and there was about her a general appearance of debility and suffering; but I have been told she never had much acute pain.

This was a little before the final removal to Winchester, in search of the best medical advice, where she and Cassandra took lodgings in College Street, her mother, of course, being unable to accompany them. But there were friends at hand, and the young people came over often to see her. In May she writes: "My dearest sister, my tender, watchful, indefatigable nurse, has not been made ill by her exertions. As to what I owe to her, and to the anxious affection of all my beloved family on this occasion, I can only cry over it, and pray to God to bless them more and more."

For the end itself, we let Cassandra speak:

To Fanny Knight

WINCHESTER, *Sunday, July* 1817.

MY DEAREST FANNY,

Doubly dear to me now for her dear sake whom we have lost. She did love you most sincerely, and never shall I forget the proofs of love you gave her during her illness in writing those kind, amusing letters at a time when I know your feelings would have dictated so different a style. Take the only reward I can give you in the assurance that your benevolent purpose *was* answered; you *did* contribute to her enjoyment.

Even your last letter afforded pleasure. I merely cut the seal and gave it to her; she opened it and read it herself, afterwards she gave it to me to read, and then talked to me a little and not uncheerfully of its contents, but there was then a languor about her which prevented her taking the same interest in anything she had been used to do.

Since Tuesday evening, when her complaint returned, there was a visible change, she slept more and much more comfortably; indeed, during the last eight-and-forty hours she was more asleep than awake. Her looks altered and she fell away, but I perceived no material diminution of strength, and, though I was then hopeless of a recovery, I had no suspicion how rapidly my loss was approaching.

I *have* lost a treasure, such a sister, such a friend as never can have been surpassed. She was the sun of my life, the gilder of every pleasure, the soother of every sorrow; I had not a thought concealed from her, and it is as if I had lost a part of myself. I loved her only too well—not better than she deserved, but I am conscious that my affection for her made me sometimes unjust to and negligent of others; and I can acknowledge, more than as a general principle, the justice of the Hand which has struck this blow.

You know me too well to be at all afraid that I should suffer materially from my feelings; I am perfectly conscious of the extent of my irreparable loss, but I am not at all overpowered and very little indisposed, nothing but what a short time, with rest and change of air, will remove. I thank God that I was enabled to attend her to the last, and amongst my many causes of self-reproach, I have not to add any wilful neglect of her comfort.

She felt herself to be dying about half-an-hour before she became tranquil and apparently unconscious. During that half-hour was her struggle, poor soul! She said she could not tell us what she suffered, though she complained of little fixed pain. When I asked her if there was anything she wanted, her answer was she wanted nothing but death, and some of her words were: "God grant me patience, pray for me, oh, pray for me!" Her voice was affected, but as long as she spoke she was intelligible.

I hope I do not break your heart, my dearest Fanny, by these particulars; I mean to afford you gratification whilst I am relieving my own feelings. I could not write so to anybody else; indeed you are the only person I have written to at all, excepting your grandmamma—it was to her, not your Uncle Charles, I wrote on Friday.

Immediately after dinner on Thursday I went into the town to do an errand which your dear aunt was anxious about. I returned about a quarter before six and found her recovering from faintness and oppression; she got so well as to be able to give me a minute account of her seizure, and when the clock struck six she was talking quietly to me.

I cannot say how soon afterwards she was seized again with the same faintness, which was followed by the sufferings she could not describe; but Mr. Lyford had been sent for, had applied something to give her ease, and she was in a state of quiet insensibility by seven o'clock at the latest. From that time till half-past four, when she ceased to breathe, she scarcely moved a limb, so that we have every reason to think, with gratitude to the Almighty, that her sufferings were over. A slight motion of the head with every breath remained till almost the last. I sat close to her with a pillow in my lap to assist in supporting her head, which was almost off the bed, for six hours; fatigue made me then resign my place to Mrs. J. A. for two hours

and a-half, when I took it again, and in about an hour more she breathed her last.

I was able to close her eyes myself, and it was a great gratification to me to render her those last services. There was nothing convulsed which gave the idea of pain in her look; on the contrary, but for the continual motion of the head, she gave one the idea of a beautiful statue, and even now, in her coffin, there is such a sweet, serene air over her countenance as is quite pleasant to contemplate.

This day, my dearest Fanny, you have had the melancholy intelligence, and I know you suffer severely, but I likewise know that you will apply to the fountain-head for consolation, and that our merciful God is never deaf to such prayers as you will offer.

The last sad ceremony is to take place on Thursday morning; her dear remains are to be deposited in the cathedral. It is a satisfaction to me to think that they are to lie in a building she admired so much; her precious soul, I presume to hope, reposes in a far superior mansion. May mine one day be re-united to it!

Your dear papa, your Uncle Henry, and Frank and Edwd. Austen, instead of his father, will attend. I hope they will none of them suffer lastingly from their pious exertions. The ceremony must be over before ten o'clock, as the cathedral service begins at that hour, so that we shall be at home early in the day, for there will be nothing to keep us here afterwards.

Your Uncle James came to us yesterday, and is gone home to-day. Uncle H. goes to Chawton to-morrow morning; he has given every necessary direction here, and I think his company there will do good. He returns to us again on Tuesday evening.

I did not think to have written a long letter when I began, but I have found the employment draw me on, and I hope I shall have been giving you more pleasure than pain. Remember me kindly to Mrs. J. Bridges (I am so glad she is with you now), and give my best love to Lizzie and all the others.

I am, my dearest Fanny,
Most affectionately yours,
Cass. Eliz. Austen.

I have said nothing about those at Chawton, because I am sure you hear from your papa.

My dearest Fanny, Chawton: *Tuesday* (*July* 29, 1817).

I have just read your letter for the third time, and thank you most sincerely for every kind expression to myself, and still more warmly for your praises of her who I believe was better known to you than to any human being besides myself. Nothing of the sort could have been more gratifying to me than the manner in which you write of her, and if the dear angel is conscious of what passes here, and is not

above all earthly feelings, she may perhaps receive pleasure in being so mourned. Had *she* been the survivor I can fancy her speaking of *you* in almost the same terms. There are certainly many points of strong resemblance in your characters; in your intimate acquaintance with each other, and your mutual strong affection, you were counterparts.

Thursday was not so dreadful a day to me as you imagined. There was so much necessary to be done that there was no time for additional misery. Everything was conducted with the greatest tranquillity, and but that I was determined I would see the last, and therefore was upon the listen, I should not have known when they left the house. I watched the little mournful procession the length of the street; and when it turned from my sight, and I had lost her for ever, even then I was not overpowered, nor so much agitated as I am now in writing of it. Never was human being more sincerely mourned by those who attended her remains than was this dear creature. May the sorrow with which she is parted with on earth be a prognostic of the joy with which she is hailed in heaven!

I continue very tolerably well—much better than any one could have supposed possible, because I certainly have had considerable fatigue of body as well as anguish of mind for months back; but I really am well, and I hope I am properly grateful to the Almighty for having been so supported. Your grandmamma, too, is much better than when I came home.

I did not think your dear papa appeared unwell, and I understand that he seemed much more comfortable after his return from Winchester than he had done before. I need not tell you that he was a great comfort to me; indeed, I can never say enough of the kindness I have received from him and from every other friend.

I get out of doors a good deal and am able to employ myself. Of course those employments suit me best which leave me most at leisure to think of her I have lost, and I do think of her in every variety of circumstance. In our happy hours of confidential intercourse, in the cheerful family party which she so ornamented, in her sick room, on her death-bed, and as (I hope) an inhabitant of heaven. Oh, if I may one day be re-united to her there! I know the time must come when my mind will be less engrossed by her idea, but I do not like to think of it. If I think of her less as on earth, God grant that I may never cease to reflect on her as inhabiting heaven, and never cease my humble endeavours (when it shall please God) to join her there.

In looking at a few of the precious papers which are now my property, I have found some memorandums, amongst which she desires that one of her gold chains may be given to her god-daughter Louisa, and a lock of her hair be set for you. You can need no assurance, my dearest Fanny, that every request of your beloved aunt

will be sacred with me. Be so good as to say whether you prefer a brooch or ring. God bless you, my dearest Fanny.

Believe me, most affectionately yours,

CASS. ELIZTH. AUSTEN.

Miss Knight, Godmersham Park,
Canterbury.

For us to whom Jane Austen is "of the things not seen," there remains that comradely spirit of loyal understanding and hidden joy so subtly and profoundly revealed by Mr. Rudyard Kipling, which unites for ever her true lovers. He has characteristically chosen for his "secret society business" a strange, and strangely mixed, little company of *Janeites*[1] to represent our great brotherhood of the quick and the dead, lending dramatic vigour to the scene. It was surely for us, moreover, that "The Sergeant" spoke so frankly yet so affectionately of her work:

"I mean that 'er characters was no *use*! They was only just like people you run across any day. One of 'em was a curate—the Reverend Collins—always on the make an' looking to marry money. Well, when I was a boy scout, 'im or 'is twin brother was our troop-leader. An' there was an upstandin' 'ard-mouthed Duchess or a Baronet's wife that didn't give a curse for any one 'oo wouldn't do what she told 'em to; the Lady—Lady Catherine (I'll get it in a minute) De Bugg. Before Ma bought the 'airdressin' business in London I used to know of an 'olesale grocer's wife near Leicester (I'm Leicester-shire myself) that might 'ave been 'er duplicate. And—oh yes—there was a Miss Bates; just an old maid runnin' about like a hen with 'er 'ead cut off, an' her tongue loose at both ends. I've got an aunt like 'er. Good as gold—but, *you* know."

"Lord, yes!" said Anthony, with feeling. "An' did you find out what *Tilniz* meant? I'm always huntin' after the meanin' of things meself."

"Yes, 'e was a swine of a major-general, retired, and on the make. They're all on the make, in a quiet way, in Jane. 'E was so much of a gentleman by 'is own estimation that 'e was always be'avin' like a hound. *You* know the sort. Turned a girl out of 'is own 'ouse because she 'adn't any money—*after*, mark you, encouragin' 'er to set 'er cap at his son, because 'e thought she had. . . . You can take it from me there's no one to touch Jane when you're in a tight place. Gawd bless her, whoever she was."

[1] In his *Debits and Credits*.

APPENDIX A

"THE MYSTERY" AND "A PLAN"

Though the precise dates of Jane Austen's earliest writings, as printed in *Love and Freindship* or described in the *Memoir*, cannot in all cases be precisely determined, it is rather clearly implied that *The Mystery* was written in the first of those elusive "three volumes" of MSS. to which we are directly and indirectly referred in various connections; and it is certainly the earliest printed composition of hers —as those in *Love and Freindship* appear to have been written later.

The phrase "unfinished" is, I think, rather a qualifying adjective than a statement of fact. In other words it is "finished" so far as the author ever wished or intended to finish it, only "*un*finished" in the sense of being undisclosed, remaining mysterious.

This teasing of the audience by making the characters "whisper" inaudibly the very secret we are all expecting to be told, is her method of ridiculing by exaggeration the absurd secrets on which the type of comedy or farce she has in mind did as a rule actually depend. It reveals her, as always at this stage, making delightful nonsense out of the books she loved, and loved to burlesque; and has the qualities, in a slighter form, of *Love and Freindship*, with something of a neat verbal assurance, and swiftness in making her point, that was characteristic of everything she wrote, early or late.

The Plan was written nearly thirty years later, when four of the novels had been published and all were written; yet

it finds her no less alive to the humorous absurdities of romance, and no less keen to enjoy burlesquing them by exaggeration into nonsense.

Whether or no the various "suggestions" were actually made, as her marginal notes declare, by different members of her family and friends, we need not seriously inquire. No doubt they, too, had retained their powers of laughter on this subject; and the *Plan* was the result of the amusement all shared over the courteous and comical correspondence with the Rev. J. S. Clarke, worthy librarian of a wicked prince. The Regent, as has been so often remarked to his credit, had wit enough to enjoy "all her publications." Having shown Miss Austen over the library at Carlton House, his librarian not only informed her that she might dedicate her next novel to the prince, but asked her "to delineate in some future work the habits of life and character, and enthusiasm of a clergyman, who should pass his time between the metropolis and the country . . . *fond of and entirely engaged in literature, no man's enemy but his own.*" The dedication, of *Emma*, was duly made; but, in forwarding a copy to the librarian, Miss Austen declared she had not the learning necessary "to do any justice to your clergyman"; for "I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress."

Mr. Clarke, however, could be no less determined upon a point than his fair correspondent; and, in pursuing the subject, gave away his own secret: that what he really desired was to have his own portrait taken by a clever lady. Though begging her to "let us have an English clergyman after your fancy," he proceeds to hint at the particular "your reverence" he has in mind. "Show, dear madam, *what good would be done if tythes were taken away entirely, and describe him burying his own mother*, as I did, *because the High*

Priest of the Parish in which she died, did not pay her remains the respect he ought to do."

About three months later, having meanwhile been appointed Chaplain and Private Secretary to the Prince of Coburg, Mr. Clarke suggests that "any historical romance, illustrative of the history of the august House of Coburg, would just now be very interesting."

Clearly Miss Austen felt that she had been plagued enough and, though her final reply was courteous, it was successfully designed to effect a closure.

> I am fully sensible that an historical romance, founded on the House of Coburg, might be much more to the purpose of profit or popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in. But I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensible for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way, and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other.

For our part we have to thank Mr. Clarke for having drawn out so much about herself and her opinions from the reticent Miss Austen.

But when we read *The Plan* in the light of this correspondence, it becomes clear how mischievously she has contrived to turn the good man's fancy for himself as the perfect priest, into the fond father of foolish fiction, gently recalling St. Aubert of *Udolpho*, and actually quoting her reverend admirer's letters in the process. To the translated cleric of Carlton House she gaily attaches the old familiar "faultless heroine," the "hero, all perfection," the "completely depraved and infamous anti-hero": with "hardly a resemblance of humanity left in him."

This is the text of all her early criticism of romance, which

was the foundation—by learning what to avoid—of her art; restated with even greater vigour in the full flower of her maturity.

"THE MYSTERY": A Comedy (*about* 1789)

Conclusion of Scene II

Daphne. My dear Mrs. Humbug, how d'ye do? Oh! Fanny, it is all over.

Fanny. Is it, indeed!

Mrs. Hum. I'm very sorry to hear it.

Fanny. Then 'twas to no purpose that I——

Daphne. None upon earth.

Mrs. Hum. And what is to become of——?

Daphne. Oh! 'tis all settled. (*Whispers Mrs. Humbug.*)

Fanny. And how is it determined?

Daphne. I'll tell you. (*Whispers Fanny.*)

Mrs. Hum. And is he to——?

Daphne. I'll tell you all I know of the matter.

(*Whispers Mrs. Humbug and Fanny.*)

Fanny. Well, now I know everything about it, I'll go away.

Mrs. Hum. } And so will I.
Daphne. }

[*Exeunt.*

"PLAN OF A NOVEL"

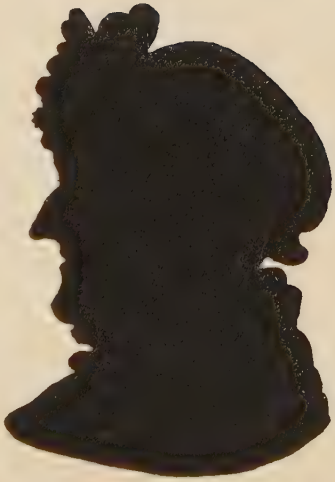
According to Hints from Various Quarters

Book to open with father and daughter conversing in long speeches, elegant language, and a tone of high serious sentiment. . . . Concluding with his opinion of the *benefits of tithes being done away with*, and his having buried his own mother (heroine's lamented grandmother) in consequence of

the High Priest of the parish in which she died refusing to pay her remains the respect due to them. The father to be of a very literary turn, an enthusiast in literature, nobody's enemy but his own; at the same time most zealous in the discharge of his pastoral duties, *the model of an exemplary high priest.* . . .

Heroine and father never above a fortnight in one place: he being driven from his curacy by the vile arts of some totally unprincipled and heartless young man, desperately in love with the heroine, and pursuing her with unrelenting passion. No sooner settled in one country of Europe than they are necessitated to quit it, and retire to another. The scene will be for ever shifting from one set of people to another, but there will be no mixture, all the good will be unexceptionable in every respect. There will be no foibles or weaknesses but with the wicked, who will be completely depraved and infamous, hardly a resemblance of humanity left in them. . . . Often carried away by the anti-hero, but rescued either by her father or the hero. Often reduced to support herself and her father by her talents, and work for her bread; continually cheated and defrauded of her hire; worn down to a skeleton, and now and then starved to death. At last, hunted out of civilized society, denied the poor shelter of the humblest cottage, they are compelled to retreat into Kamtschatka, where the poor father quite worn down, finding his end approaching, throws himself on the ground, and after four or five hours of tender advice and parental admonition to his miserable child, expires in a fine burst of literary enthusiasm, intermingled *with invectives against holders of tithes.* Heroine inconsolable for some time, but afterwards crawls back towards her former country, having at least twenty narrow escapes of falling into the hands of anti-hero; and at last, in the very nick of time, turning a corner to avoid him, runs into the arms of the hero himself.

Rev. George Austen



Mrs. Austen

Cassandra Austen

APPENDIX B

A FAMILY OF WRITERS

FOUR GENERATIONS

More than one recent writer on Jane Austen has justly protested against the assumption, for many years practically universal and continually repeated, that Jane Austen was altogether isolated from literary or cultured associations, and should be regarded as a genius mysteriously sprung from an alien soil. Though it is true that she never mixed with professional journalists or men of letters, and did not even meet any contemporary poets, novelists, or critics, she was, on the other hand, peculiarly fortunate in the immediate surroundings of her home. It is not difficult, indeed, to detect the influence on her work of a family, in several generations habitually expressing their thoughts in the written word: some merely for each other's entertainment—reasonably adept at delightful nonsense in verse or prose, others more or less scholarly essayists; one and all book-lovers and fluent penmen. Such vitality of composition has survived in different members of the family, partly utilized in biography and criticism of Jane herself, but also expressed in fiction to the present day.

A closer consideration of such powers and taste completes our picture of Jane; and for this purpose I have gathered together, and illustrated by representative selection, various pieces that have somewhat irregularly found their way into print, from Jane's father to her niece's granddaughter.

How far the Rev. George either wrote or preserved any

serious prose compositions we do not know; but as preacher and tutor he must have practised the art of writing for many years, and obviously did much for the training of his children's minds, more directly perhaps for the sons, but quite extensively for Jane and Cassandra. We can, however, only present him by one of the family *Charades*, printed for charity in later years; where also we find a sprightly example of Mrs. Austen's racy humour, with evidence that Cassandra and even Admiral Frank were ready enough to unbend on suitable occasions. It is, however, in the eighteenth-century, or Addisonian, satire of *The Loiterer*, by James and Henry, that we reach the most important evidence of "atmosphere" in Jane Austen's childhood. She has more than once borne grateful witness to the happy result on a young girl's character of having her mind trained by an affectionate elder brother (or cousin); and no doubt these two often played the part of Henry Tilney and Edmund Bertram to those more capable of absorbing culture, and no less ready to appreciate learning, than Catherine Morland or Fanny Price. There is a pedantry of the Schools in James and Henry from which Jane is absolutely free; but they had their share of humour, and she derived a respect for words and purity of style from them.

It is manifest that all influences from an early generation and her own, were of the best for her encouragement and training upon the threshold of her career.

It was the children of James—Anna, Caroline, and James Edward (Austen-Leigh)—who first took up story-writing in the next generation; and the *Letters* tell us something of their attempts, particularly those of Anna, in comments from their aunt, revealing her views of what a novel should be more directly than elsewhere. All three plainly had ideas of their own and some gifts for invention, though all naturally admiring and probably to some extent striving to

follow after Jane. But various circumstances distracted them in later life from the active pursuit of fiction; in part, we can well imagine, from the feeling that it was not well for any so near her to lower the family genius, whom they could never expect nor desire to rival.

It is practically certain, however, that *Mary Hamilton* was the work of Caroline or Anna, most probably the latter; and I imagine this belongs to a later date.

Meanwhile, from a younger part of the family, Frank's fourth daughter Catherine became in due course the "official" novelist—so to speak—of the second generation. She was not born till 1818, but early learned from Aunt Cassandra a loving intimacy with the novels; though it was not until she had married the barrister, John Hubback, in 1842, that her own work took shape and form.

Though no doubt, as we now say, an ardent "Janeite," and from the personal side always eager to gather and transmit to her own children all memories and family legends of Jane Austen, her own work belongs to an age (or at least to a group in the age) that seems more distant from Emma Woodhouse or Jane Bennet than our own. They, indeed, belong to all time; the stories and characters of Mrs. Hubback are very much concerned with questions of the moment, somewhat precisely reflecting emotions and manners that were in the fashion—whether to approve or correct; and—save in one case dealt with elsewhere (p. 86)—she passes out of our field.

With her granddaughter, Mrs. Brown, we come back, by way of humour and imagination, rather near to Jane.

First approaching us as junior-author of the interesting and useful *Sailor Brothers*, she recently disentangled Mrs. Hubback's very much revised version of *The Watsons* from its abundant "foreign matter," in a brief conclusion more consciously from Jane, yet very much her own (see p. 88).

And she has now taken up that fascinating game of inventing "new fancies" about the "younger sisters" and brothers of persons in Jane Austen, to which Mrs. Brinton introduced us in 1914 (see p. 235).

The qualities of *Margaret Dashwood* and *Susan Price*, of which the conclusion of *The Watsons* revealed promise, are both original and derived. The stories would have no life if Mrs. Brown had not made them her own, and she is too wise for any attempt at direct imitation of a style so perfect and so individual as Jane Austen's. Yet the works recall the manner no less than the persons and plot of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Mansfield Park*.

Without Jane's compact swiftness of phrase, seldom if ever darting upon the word or thought that seizes a point as it flies, revealing everything in a flash, Mrs. Brown has caught —and practises with ease—the quiet choice and arrangement of words which conveys the humour of a situation without mentioning it or even appearing to observe it. Her seemingly plain statement or narrative, like Jane's, always includes an aside to the reader from which we learn more than is actually said, of a tale told simultaneously from within and without. There is a secret message from an author who never intrudes. Actual characters and scenes from Jane are often recalled, but spontaneously—in the company to which they belong. Success is achieved because nothing is forced. The new harmonizes with the old. Mrs. Brown has not solemnly set out to produce a Jane-Austen novel; but, like Jane, she has determined to enjoy herself and is hoping to entertain us by the latest intelligence of our very dear friends.

GEORGE AUSTEN

From "Charades" (*about* 1792)

[Published in *Charades, etc.* Written a hundred years ago. By Jane Austen and her family, 1895. Sold at bazaar for St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, containing three 4-line verses by Jane.

Mary Augusta Austen-Leigh reprinted "The Charades" in her *Personal Aspects of Jane Austen*, 1920, with this comment:

"The key to No. 5 was long lost, and many accomplished charade-guessers tried in vain to recover the meaning which George Austen had hidden with such graceful subtilty. It was at last discovered not very long ago by his great-great-grandson, the late William Chambers Lefroy, Esq., of Golding Basingstoke."

The key is *A Light.*]

V

Without me, divided, fair ladies, I ween,
At a ball or a concert you'll never be seen,
You must do me together, or safely I'd swear,
Whatever your carriage, you'll never get there.

CASSANDRA (MRS. GEORGE AUSTEN)

From "Charades"

VI

Sometimes I am bright, sometimes covered with soot,
I'm of very great use at a feast;
I am often applied to the right or the left foot;
I'm a Fish, I'm a Boy, I'm a Beast.

[The key is *Jack.*]

JAMES AND HENRY

From *The Loiterer*, a periodical work in two volumes. First published at Oxford, 1789, 1790. Printed for the author. Oxford, London, Birmingham, Bath, Reading, 1790.

When James Austen returned to Oxford in 1789, as a young Fellow of St. John's, he soon projected and produced

this forgotten periodical; which apart from its interesting association with Jane Austen, is rather above than below the average quality and substance of similar academic ephemera. Among other features it has some right to the claim put forward by James in his concluding number, of presenting a "rough, but not entirely inaccurate sketch of the character, the manners, and the amusements of Oxford at the close of the eighteenth century." At the same time, fortunately, the editor gave us a key to the authorship of the various articles, mostly written by a group of friends, from which we learn that those signed S. and C. are his own; while Henry, at this time an undergraduate, used the initial E.

This work was dedicated to the President and Fellows of St. John's, Oxford: " to supply a regular succession of moral lectures, critical remarks, and elegant humour," with " as much learning, sense, and wit as we can afford for the money," by " a small society of friends who have long been accustomed to devote our evenings to something like learned pursuits," and have determined " no longer to keep our talents wrapt in a napkin."

The *Loiterer* professes that he " is allied to some of the richest men and prettiest women in the kingdom." He claims that " no other periodical since the *Terrae Filius* has been confined to academic life "; and when bidding his readers farewell, congratulates himself that " the little foibles and failings this work was intended to correct have now entirely disappeared "—surely a notable triumph for the labours of just over one year!

Though more officially " correct " than Jane, and slightly prone to edification, like her they " are evidently in sympathy with Cowper's return to nature from the more artificial and mechanical style of Pope's imitators "; and when desiring to reprove or criticize their fellow-gownsmen, wisely

approach them by way of satire—on lines afterwards developed by their sister towards other spheres of manners and social life.

In the second volume the writers did not, in fact, strictly confine themselves to university matters, and Henry, for example, contributed several little tales, including a variation of *Pamela* very politely told.

JAMES AUSTEN

"On the Absurdity of Marrying for Affection" (*August* 15, 1789)

There is one subject which above all others affords never failing matter of Contention between Fathers, Uncles, or Guardians, and their Sons, Nephews or Wards. I mean (to uſe the words of a celebrated Dramatic Authoreſs) "*The great univerſal purpoſe*, MATRIMONY"; on which the above-mentioned perſonages have adopted Ideas ſo very diſſimilar, that to endeavour to reconcile them would be a vain attempt. For nothing is more true, than that the *young* have taken it into their heads to imagine that Youth and Beauty, Good Temper and Good Senſe, are the best recommendations in a Wife; that on this occaſion ſimilarity of diſpoſitions ſhould be conſulted rather than the equality of fortunes, and that mutual Affection is a ſurer baſis of Conjugal Happineſs than a Hundred Thouſand Pounds. While the *old*, on the other hand, have diſcovered that it is no matter how wide the tempers are ſeparated, provided that the Eſtates join: in order to get poſſeſſion of a rotten Borough, would gladly exchange all the beauties of the perſon, and all the graces of the mind; and (rather than ſtand upon trifles) give the four Cardinal Virtues into the bargain. . . .

Who has ever been in the Houſe with a new-married Couple who are abſurd enough to let their happineſs depend on each other, and not obſerved what endleſs doubts, anxieties and fears, each party is led into by their unnatural, and ill-placed partiality. If the Lady looks too pale or too red, too thin or too plump, the Huſband is immediately under the moſt cruel alarm for her health. He has a whole liſt of Diſorders which he thinks ſhe may have, and what is worſe, a whole liſt of Remedies to cure them. While on the other ſide, the Lady (not to be behindhand with him) is in continual apprehenſion from the falling of Horſes, and the burſting of Guns: Moſt inhumanly inſiſts on tying a ſilk handkerchief round his neck in a room full of company, and if buſineſs ſhould call him ten miles from home, parts from him with as much reluctance as if he were going to the *Antipodes*.

Now all this is morally impoſſible to happen to thoſe who marry on what are (properly enough) called prudential motives. For ſo warm is their indifference, ſo impaſſioned their apathy, and ſo harmonious their diſagreement, that nothing which happens to the one can in the leaſt affect the other. . . .

Nor will the advantages of prudential marriages ſtop here, ſince it is alſo owing to their prevalence, that we ſee every day ſuch inſtances of the ſublimeſt virtues amongſt the married of both Sexes, eſpecially in the higher ranks of life; (who in this as in every thing elſe, ſeem particularly deſirous of ſetting a good example to their inferiors:) nothing being more common than to ſee Husbands loſing their fortunes, and Wives their reputation, without cauſing any alteration in the behaviour, or any diminution in the Affection of the other. So truly are Reſignation and Fortitude the peculiar characteriſtics of the preſent age. . . .

My firſt and greateſt objection to matches of affection ariſes from obſerving the large families with which thoſe who marry for love are commonly bleſſed, and the conſequent increaſe of Population in a Country which cannot already ſupport half its inhabitants.

It muſt indeed be owned, that the Legiſlature of this Kingdom (who ſeem equally fearful with myſelf of the misfortune of being too populous) have done all in their power to diminiſh the number of his Majesty's ſubjects, by paſſing the *Marriage Act*. And their efforts have not been altogether without effect; yet it may be fairly inferred, that our Country is even now much too crowded with inhabitants, both from the immenſe annual exports of each Sex which we find ourſelves obliged to make to Botany Bay and other places; and from the very ſmall proviſion for many of thoſe who are left behind. We have at preſent Officers without pay, Clergymen without livings; Lawyers without practice, and Stateſmen without places. . . .

After this, it is perhaps ſcarce neceſſary to enumerate the leſs important ſufferings which ſome of the inferior ranks of life would experience, if the preſent faſhionable mode of forming matrimonial connections, and its equally faſhionable conſequences, were to be aboliſhed. . . . And I am ſtill more ſerioufly concerned for the fate of thoſe ingenious gentlemen, who (doubtleſs with an intention to reform the Age) have been at the pains of publiſhing a very copious and minute account of all the various Heroes and Heroines, who for theſe laſt twenty years have been moſt celebrated for faſhionable infidelity. Which ſaid narrations, together with the elegant and intereſting Frontiſpieces annexed, muſt have tended highly to the Edification of the Britiſh Youth of both Sexes, and ſhould, I think, have well entitled the Compilers of them to the moſt *exalted* rewards.

I ſhould truſt, therefore, that the above-mentioned

arguments, if conſidered in their proper lights, would be ſufficient to deter the *young* from marrying on motives of Affection.

From "The Art of Spending Time, the Journal of a Modern Oxford Beau." (*February* 21, 1789)

Monday

Racket *rowed* me up at ſeven o'clock—ſleepy and queer, but forced to get up to make breakfaſt for him—eight to five in the afternoon, hunting—famous run, and killed near Biceſter—number of tumbles—Freshman out on Racket's ſtone horſe—got the devil of a fall into a ditch—horſe upon him—but don't know whether he was killed or not.—Five, dreſſed and went to dine with Racket—Dean had croſs'd his name, and no dinner could be got—went to the Angel and dined—famous evening till eleven, but when the Proctors came and told us to go home to our Colleges—went directly the contrary way—eleven to one, went down into St. Thomas's and fought a raff—one, dragged home by ſomebody, the Lord knows whom, and put to bed.

Tuesday

Very bruiſed and ſore, did not get up till twelve—found an impoſition on my table—mem. to give it the hair-dreſſer—drank six diſhes of tea—did not know what to do with myſelf, ſo wrote to my father for money.—Half after one, put on my boots to ride for an hour—met Careleſs at the ſtable—rode together—aſked me to dine with him and meet Jack Sedley, who is juſt returned from France—two to three, returned home and dreſſed—four to ſeven, dinner and wine—Jack very pleaſant—told ſome good ſtories—ſays the French women have thick legs—no hunting to be

got, and very little wine—won't go there in a hurry—seven, went to the ſtable and then looked in at the coffee-houſe—very few drunken men, and nothing going forwards—agreed to play Sedley at billiards—Walker's table engaged, and forced to go to the Blue Posts—loſt two guineas—thought I could have beat him, but the dog has been practiſing in France—ten, ſupper at Careleſs's,—bought Sedley's mare for thirty guineas—think he knows nothing of a horſe, and believe I have done him.—Drank a little punch, and went to bed at twelve.

HENRY AUSTEN

From "The Peculiar Danger of Rusticus from the Attacks of a Female Cousin." (*September* 5, 1789)

To the Author of "The Loiterer"

Little did I think, Mr. Loiterer, two months ago, that it was in the power of Man, I ſhould rather ſay of Woman, to reduce me from the happy ſtate of thoughtleſs content to the tormenting ſolicitude of deliberating without thought, or thinking without reſolution.—But I will endeavour to compoſe my thoughts and arrange my narrative in due diſpoſition, that you may the more eaſily comprehend the nature of my caſe, and preſcribe to your Patient accordingly.

I am a middled aged man, perhaps about 35, or perhaps a little more: An inch they ſay is a good deal in a man's noſe, but a year or two is nothing in the age of one, bleſſed with ſound Lungs, and active Limbs. . . .

My cousins came into the room flounce all at once, and as they ruſhed through the Door, one of them contrived to hitch her petticoats over a chair ſo neatly, that in her hurry to disengage herſelf (poor Creature) ſhe was obliged to ſhew

her Legs (I ſhould have ſaid Ancles) as high as the Garter. I was going to bluſh, only I found ſhe made nothing of it. My Couſin now introduced me, and I made one of my very beſt bows, which laſted twice as long as their *bob courtesy*, and I thought drew ſomething like a ſmile from Miſs Betſy, the youngeſt.

The conſciouſness of my own awkward behaviour was ſuch, that I inſtantly turned down my eyes, and began ſipping my tea with ſuch aſſiduity that I burnt my mouth moſt woefully, and I believe have perſuaded the company that I had not made a good meal for 24 hours before.

It was not 'till after the firſt courſe that I had time to look at the Ladies, in whoſe appearance three hours' duty at the toilet had made a conſiderable alteration. Their hair no longer hung in matted heaps, half combed through, and half in brown plaiſter, but by infinite art, and repeated ſingeing, hung down in natural curls; nor had their complexion ſuffered a leſs material change; white and red of the moſt beautiful and gloſſy subſtance was ſpread over each feature with true *keeping* and excellent mellowneſs.—But above all, their necks (no ladies have boſoms) were conſiderably altered. They had early in the morning appeared cloſe covered up, and pinned tight under the chin like quakers, but they now ſhone in all the blaze of undiſſembled charms. Their handkerchief opened on each ſide, and left between it a ſpace of at least eight inches, which was occupied, not covered, by a bit of narrow lace, a part of the Ladies dreſs which I have ſince heard called a *Modesty piece*. My Rector aſſerts that it is so termed, becauſe it is the only immodeſt part of a woman's dreſs, like *lucus a non lucendo*; I don't understand Latin myſelf, but I am ſure it is hardly modeſty enough to ſwear by. But to reſume my narrative.

From this moment began the long premeditated attack:

all the batteries of ogles, ſighs, and ſmiles, were at once opened againſt me, which engaged ſo much of my attention, that I preſumed not to eat another mouthful, and being at the ſame time cloſely wedged in, between the Curate of the Pariſh, (who dined with us) and the leg of the table, I might with truth be ſaid to ſuffer at once, the united horrors of a famine and a blockade. . . .

What can I do, Mr. Loiterer,—what can I do? Here will be time and opportunity, for in my own houſe I muſt be civil, and with time and opportunity my old Aunt uſed to ſay, a Woman might marry any body ſhe liked.

Only conſider my ſituation, unable to fly, and unwilling to contend, I can neither oppoſe, or give way. Oh! the torture of being loved againſt one's will, and being married in ſpite of one's self!!

Pity my incoherence, Mr. Loiterer, and compaſſionate my misfortunes, for added to all the reſt, I have lately learnt that a ſcrophulous complaint has for generations been hereditary in my Couſin's Family. Is not this too bad?

CASSANDRA AUSTEN

From "Charades"

XVI

Should you chance to suffer thirst
Turn my second to my first;
My whole is in the garden dug,
And may be fairly called a drug.

[The key is *Liquorice*.]

FRANCIS AUSTEN

From "Charades"

XVII

By my first you may travel with safety and speed,
Though many dislike the conveyance indeed;
My second no woman can well be.
My whole takes a change several times in a year,
Hot and cold, wet and dry, benignant, severe,
What am I, fair lady, pray tell me?

[The key is *Season*.]

ANNA AUSTEN (MRS. LEFROY)?

"Mary Hamilton"

This little story was first printed in Alaric A. Watts's *Literary Souvenir* for 1834 as "By a Niece of the Late Miss Austen," and has been similarly reprinted by Messrs. Elkin Mathews and Marrot, 1927, in their "Baskerville Series."

Considering that Cassandra herself and many of her nephews and nieces were alive in 1834 there can be no doubt that in ascribing this work to "*a* niece," Alaric Watts knew he was on safe ground, and had his statement been false it would certainly have been contradicted; although no representative of the family now living seems to have known anything of the tale, or to be prepared more precisely to determine authorship.

Certainly Mr. Hubback would know if his mother had written it, and I do not feel much doubt that a very close verbal resemblance I have discovered between the author's description of "Knightswood Park and the old Manor

House of Beauchamps" and the description of Steventon, with a glimpse of the Manor House, in the *Memoir*, points to Anna *or* Caroline, "chief assistants" of J. E. Austen-Leigh, to whom he was not only "indebted for their memory of facts, but *sometimes used their words*."

It is written in the *Memoir*:

"But the chief beauty of Steventon consisted in its hedgerows. A hedgerow in that country does not mean a thin formal line of quickset, but an irregular border of copsewood and timber, often wide enough to contain within it a *winding footpath* or a rough cart-track. *Under its shelter the earliest primroses*, anemones, and wild hyacinths were to be found. . . .

"One of these ran straight up the hill . . . to the parish church, . . . within sight of no habitation, except a glimpse of the grey manor-house through its *circling green of sycamores* . . . *Sweet violets*, both purple and white, grow in abundance beneath its south wall."

In *Mary Hamilton* we read:

"I crossed the park, and strolled leisurely *up the winding path* of an adjacent hill. It had been formerly a favourite walk with Julia and me, for it wound along the *sunny side of a hedgerow*, where the *first sweet violets* and *the earliest tufts of primroses displayed* their delicate blossoms. . . .

"I rambled on, from field to field, following the same well-known track, till on descending the opposite brow, close beneath me stood, amid its richly-timbered meadows, its gable-end looking out from a *screen of ancient sycamores*, *the old manor-house* of Beauchamps."

Now, I do not believe that any Austen would have borrowed thus from a cousin, without acknowledgment, and the two passages are most probably from the same pen.

It is expressly stated in the *Life and Letters* that Caroline obeyed her aunt's instructions to write less during her girlhood and "never wrote stories for publication"; and at any rate William, the senior author, must have known her well, more intimately probably than Anna, who was far older, and his father's half-sister.

Miss Lefroy, indeed, tells the sad tale of her mother's "throwing on the fire" the unfinished novel that Jane had discussed with her in so much detail. But there were particular associations here, that would not apply to work begun after her aunt's death. It would seem, moreover, that while Caroline's only attempts were manifestly a child's, Anna's were more mature, and she, probably, had serious thoughts of future publication.

The influence of Jane Austen is unmistakable in *Mary Hamilton*, though it has features she would not have tolerated for a moment. It is told in letters from one *man* to another(!), almost without dialogue and, in a long and important part of the narrative, from the memories of an old family servant, explaining events outside the time of the story itself.

The heroine's mother had married "to disoblige her family" and, like Fanny Price, the little girl is "brought up, I will not say petted, still less educated," by her grand relations, with no help from maps or globes. There is Cousin Mark, however, to bid her not let "them bother her about their music and nonsense"; after which "he and Miss Mary got leave to have a few shelves put up in her own room, set the books up in order, and some of them they read together, by snatches, and some he marked for her to read to herself when he was gone." She is, in fact, a second Fanny.

Quiet events follow in the quiet Austen way, though without any relief from humour and on a far sadder note.

Like Edmund, Mark at first prefers a more fashionable cousin to Mary; and like Captain Wentworth, did not discover her charms until their meeting again after many years.

With an *occasional* neat turn of wit and a certain gracious sentiment of its own we can say no more of *Mary Hamilton* than that it pleasantly brings Jane Austen to mind.

A Poor Relation

Mary was the only child of a niece of Mrs. Gifford, who had married in some way or other to disoblige her family; and the little girl, being at a very early age deprived of both her parents, had been received at Beauchamps; and brought up, I will not say petted, still less educated, by her great-aunt. This lady never appeared to me encumbered with any prejudices in favour of her own sex; for she bestowed infinitely more attention and indulgence on Mark, who was her husband's nephew, and destined to be her successor at Beauchamps.

There was at Beauchamps no governess, no maps, no globes, grammars, or Mangnall's Questions. Mary, I believe, duly read the Psalms and chapters of the day to her aunt, or her aunt's favourite maid; and at certain periods an old village schoolmaster attended, to instruct her in writing and arithmetic. For the rest, I have always understood that her cousin Mark's first set of shirts with collars were her own entire performance, and that for recreation, she examined the hens' nests, had chickens of her own to rear, feed, and attend; collected herbs for Mark's rabbits, or rose leaves, and lavender for drying in the summer; made snow-balls in the winter, and often ran through the dirt into the village with her aunt's newspaper; which was daily lent to an elderly gentlewoman who resided there in obscure circumstances. . . .

APPENDIX C

SOME CHARACTERS IN JANE AUSTEN

Interpreted by Other Hands

From time to time writers with imagination have been tempted to try their hands at dialogues and situations in which the minor, or younger, persons of Jane Austen's novels, sometimes only very slightly mentioned, play the roles of leading ladies and gentlemen; with our old friends hovering more or less in the background to watch the fun and, occasionally, pull strings. Where the work is reasonably well done, and no flagrant discordances with the thought or manner of Jane Austen intrude, we should be only grateful, I think, for the chance of entering once more into such delightful company, and of wondering whether the young people would have taken life as here presented, and how far our more familiar friends here act consistently with the original portraits. These writers are mostly wise enough not to attempt direct imitation of Jane Austen's individual style and, by that means, come nearer her spirit.

SYBIL G. BRINTON

"Old Friends and New Fancies"

(An imaginary sequel to the novels of Jane Austen, 1914)

This is perhaps the most ambitious of all the stories of its kind, for Mrs. Brinton has boldly mingled almost all the Jane Austen characters together in one continuous narrative which is, however, scarcely a novel, as it has no regular

hero and heroine, or plot. William Price is the most attractive figure, and after a fairly vigorous flirtation with Kitty Bennet, marries Georgiana Darcy, who had earlier been persuaded into an engagement with Fitzwilliam. He, despite the jealous machinations of Mrs. Robert Ferrars and Lucy Steele, marries Mary Crawford.

Mrs. Brinton, remembering Jane Austen's own disclosure that Kitty married a clergyman near Pemberley, consoles her with the Rev. James Morland; not, I imagine, quite the gentleman Jane had in mind: Tom Bertram marries Isabella Thorpe; and so the merry tale proceeds.

Emma Knightley has not forgotten her taste for match-making, nor Elizabeth Darcy her trick of managing other people's affairs. Lady Portinscale (Eleanor Tilney) remains an excellent and prudent friend, Mrs. Edward Ferrars a sober counsellor, and Marianne Brandon as warm-hearted as before. Anne Wentworth has grown rather more lively, but Lady Catherine and Mrs. Jennings are not softened by age.

On the whole, I think, Mrs. Brinton manages her big team with discretion and skill. They certainly seem like "old friends"; Jane Austen would never have attempted such a crowd, but if we can fancy her more witty, it is only to be the more grateful for having her thus brought so closely to mind.

The following scene of "confidences" about William Price, between Kitty and Georgiana, is characteristic of the tale at its best, and reveals the author's treatment of her *dramatis personæ*.

An Intimate Confession

"Now do tell me what you think of him. You can judge now, cannot you? Is he not delightful? Is he not handsome, and a noble creature? Is he not all I said?"

Austen's style than anywhere else, and on the whole very successfully accomplished. Mr. Collins is in most excellent form, Wickham and Lydia (overheard below) appear quite admirably themselves.

Overheard at the Inn

" It signifies not, Mrs. Wickham, what your opinion may be, for the thing must be done. Money we must have, and your sister's influence with Mr. Darcy is our only prospect of relief. Your father will do no more."

She pouted angrily.

" I am quite as sensible as you are, Wickham, of our need of money; but you know how I hate travelling alone, with all the men ogling me and the servants looking for vails that I have it not to give. Come with me, and all will be well."

Her tone was cajoling.

" Oblige me with the letter you received from Mrs. Darcy a week since," was his only reply.

She pulled out a dog's-eared letter from her reticule, and he read aloud:

" ' I regret, my dear Lydia, to be obliged to speak plainly and say that the less Mr. Darcy meets Mr. Wickham the more likely is his benevolence to continue.' Now, Mrs. Wickham, in view of that statement, where is the sense in urging me to accompany you to Rosings ? " . . .

" It would show more consideration for me, Wickham, if you was to come. You know how poor my nerves are, and the flutterations I suffer from at the thought of seeing Darcy. Such a stiff, starched man—I don't know how Elizabeth endures him. And the last time I stayed at Pemberley, the airs of her maid sunk my spirits altogether. I have not a gown equal to her black silk. The miseries

our marriage has brought upon me—Good God! what a fool I was!"

"It was certainly not forced upon *you*, Madam, whatever it might be on me."

"A pleasant allusion, I must say," said Mrs. Wickham, tossing her ringlets; then, beginning to giggle: "But you was always a quiz, Wickham, and don't mean the half you say. You know how I hate travelling alone, whereas you and me could pick up some friends on the way, and have a hand at cards. Don't drink no more now. You will want your head clear for the races."

MRS. FRANCIS BROWN

"Margaret Dashwood" or "Interference," 1929

"Susan Price" or "Resolution," 1930

In *Margaret Dashwood* and *Susan Price* Mrs. Brown has taken a line at once more and less daring than Mrs. Brinton or Mrs. Beck: more daring because, by confining herself to the scene and persons of one novel she challenges comparison more directly with Jane Austen, and less so because this very restriction avoids the risk of possibly indiscreet combinations between Hartfield and Pemberley, Tom Bertram and Isabella Thorpe.

It is written that, "fortunately for Sir John and Mrs. Jennings, when Marianne was taken from them, Margaret had reached an age highly suitable for dancing, and not very ineligible for being supposed to have a lover"; and, on those closing words of consolation, Mrs. Brown has founded her tale of a younger sister's romance, of "that which happens to some few fortunate mortals and is called 'Love at First Sight' . . . that kind of happiness which is not deserved because no one can deserve it."

I think, whether intentionally or not, Mrs. Brown has made Margaret a little more "modern" than Marianne and Elinor, or indeed than any of Jane Austen's heroines[1]; inasmuch as observing the inconvenience of frankness in her elders, she deliberately conceals her thoughts. Though, indeed, she had "learned more of the meaning of the word 'poor' than either of her sisters," and poverty led Jane Fairfax into similar self-protecting insincerities.

"When her sisters married, and she herself became the object of raillery at Barton Park, she made up her mind that smiling calm would prove the best defence, that she would show nothing, and if possible feel nothing, of vexation, and that no one, not even her mother, should have reason to suppose her affected by any remark on the subject of love and marriage."

Margaret finds Love just where Marianne had found him, as she was hurrying down the hill: but it was a scarf and not an ankle which the agreeable young stranger so amiably appeared to readjust, and there was *no occasion for their entering the cottage*! The delightful indiscretion was repeated before it had been recounted, and therefrom grows the tale; though Captain Pennington is more a Wentworth than a Willoughby, and the last person in the world to shirk his fences, whatever the chase. Only chance kept their secret awhile, supported by Margaret's distaste for discussing herself with others; and the consequences of subsequent half-disclosures naturally produce misunderstanding and much distress.

Though all the plot follows *Sense and Sensibility*, and Barton is only deserted, in a few scenes, for Delaford, Mrs. Brown has used other novels, apart from the obvious importation of private theatricals from *Mansfield Park*; without invading

[1] Lady Carey's capacity for being bored again, surprisingly shared by Mrs. Dashwood, is, I think, too modern; a slip in reproducing the period.

them. There is much of the "Collins" manner in her clergyman of the parish, though it serves to conceal a personality of sense, culture, and charm. Something from Lady Catherine is cunningly added to Mrs. Ferrars. The Carey governess has all the accomplishments and refinement of Jane Fairfax, with Emma's distaste for being a poor spinster or spending her life in schoolrooms. The glory and the drawbacks of being a sailor's wife are echoed from *Persuasion*, and I half suspect the dear boy Walter Carey was fathered by William Price; as Elinor's open match-making on his behalf is no less misdirected than Emma's arrangements for Harriet. The subtle satire of the concluding "moral" is recollected from *Northanger Abbey*.

But though true Janeites will detect, and rejoice in, these origins; it should be said that all are fitted naturally into their place, so that the general reader will accept characters and scenes as true to life without suspicion of anything composite in their construction.

It is delightful, moreover, to find so much justice done to Mrs. Dashwood, one of Jane's most lovable creations; and we welcome the extra manliness here granted Edward Ferrars. I scarcely think Jane Austen would have allowed her heroine even a "conducted" elopement; but she would certainly have permitted Marianne to *plan* and promote such a scheme with generous enthusiasm.

Margaret Dashwood is a novel Jane Austen might have thought out, and planned to write; though for some particular reasons not applicable to her great-grandniece to-day, she would probably have modified some detail before publication and added thereto the peculiar virtues of her genius.

Mrs. Brown wisely only revives those characteristics of Jane which are in her own nature; the love of life and the quiet, but keen, sense of fun without the bright sparkle of

shrewd wit, the torrent of hilarious nonsense, or the power to smile and sting. She takes us back to Longbourn and Upper Cross, by being quite simply and happily, herself.

Without question, Mrs. Brown's aims and methods are justified in *Susan Price*. As formerly, she has based her plot on the slightest of possible hints, or clues, from Jane about the heroine's "younger sister"; who is mentioned in the conclusion as being of stouter calibre than Fanny; and therefore here rightly developed into a spirited and competent girl, grateful indeed for her material mercies but enjoying them without a sense of humble inferiority and quite determined to hold on, if necessary by her own efforts, as long as she possibly can. She, too, is a little more modern than the earlier heroine, more self-confident, more understanding, and less conventional in social, and moral, judgment. Yet there is nothing hard in her composition and, personally, I find her a most attractive—and vividly portrayed—personality.

The plot is necessarily more complex than *Margaret Dashwood*, because *Mansfield Park* was Miss Austen's most complicated story; and Mrs. Brown has chosen, wisely, the simplest possible shifting of parts to carry on the romance of the Bertrams. Tom falls in love with Susan and, once more, her only practical rival is Mary Crawford, though Tom was never serious about *her*; Mrs. Norris is brought back to make mischief and keep "these presuming Prices" in their place; Sir Thomas proves himself more liberal-minded than Edmund. As we know, Tom had already begun to take life more seriously, and Susan has just the qualities to fix him happily for ever.

But she is not infatuated as Fanny had been: she will not hastily believe in his constancy: and the solid advantages of Mansfield Park are not to be given up for an *un*certain courtship and the *certain* disapproval of authority. It is,

in fact, her "Determination" which mainly guides the plot.

In her treatment of Fanny and Edmund, Mrs. Brown is clearly seen to be of those who have never placed this heroine of Jane's among their favourites. The worthy couple are here—as might be expected—only a little more than ever themselves; always tiresomely correct and in the right. Edmund, indeed, has acquired the habit of catching a little cough because, as Tom had often observed, his wife's attentions made invalidism so attractive; but duty was never neglected. Fanny, at once "so docile and so radiant," has not yet acquired the courage to consider "her own inclinations, and it still seemed to her very natural that she must do what she disliked." As, moreover, she never misses seeing and anticipating evil, and never alters her own opinions, she is of little assistance to her sister and, indeed, comes dangerously near ruining her chances altogether. Mrs. Brown, justly, compels us to respect the Edmund Bertrams, but she does not ask us to like them.

We are pleased to find that brother William has acquired a flair for agreeable gallantry, and is ready to enjoy competing with Cousin Tom for the favours of the fair; without allowing Miss Mary to make the least "little hole in his heart."

Sir Thomas has grown wiser and kindlier with the years: he no longer trusts Mrs. Norris; he loved Susan "as a daughter" from the first.

In a word, both character and atmosphere are reproduced with engaging humour; proceeding along a very similar course of true love, sufficiently varied to secure and hold our interest. In accordance with Jane's invariable inclination, acute or prolonged tragedy is avoided, since Susan discovers the reality and strength of her emotion just at the moment when circumstances (*designed* to thwart her) have, naturally, led Tom to prove himself serious and

sincere; and protracted misery is avoided by her prompt and dramatic ultimatum.

To secure the disturbing factor required, by the return of Mrs. Norris, Mrs. Brown has been obliged—for once—to depart from her original. She arranges for Maria to run away into matrimony with an apothecary! as Jane, I am sure, never intended. In *her* mind, Mrs. Norris stood for eternal punishment, on earth: and Maria had merited the verdict. Jane Austen was not at the moment concerned with realities, but with morals. For, of course, no flesh and blood Maria would have put up with the tormentor a moment after any means of escape presented themselves. Jane *knew* this; and Mrs. Brown has a perfect right to make use of her knowledge.

I have not noticed any clearly marked importations from other novels; but *Mansfield Park* itself provides sufficient, for this delightful reincarnation.

The Art of Conversation

[From *Margaret Dashwood* or "Interference."]

Mr. Atherton's conversation could be checked, but could not be diverted. He had come prepared to admire Margaret, and admire her he would. He was in the habit of recounting his experiences, and recount them he would. . . . He was sure of his audience and of their attention, and took all else for granted.

After a careful description of his journey he allowed himself to return to more personal topics.

"I have had the pleasure of meeting your son and his charming wife, madam. They were so good as to ask me to dine with them and, after dinner, I had the felicity of beholding a portrait of yourself and your two lovely daughters, the work, so I understand, of your eldest and

most highly gifted daughter. I was therefore in some degree prepared—I may say I expected almost a disappointment, but such is far from being the case.

. . . . . .

"You have a very pretty dining-parlour, madam, and a charming prospect, but that mulberry tree is too near. Take my advice, madam, and have it cut down. You would then secure a beautiful open view across the valley."

. . . Trees too near a house were unhealthy. Small rooms were also to be deplored. Did Mrs. Dashwood not consider this dining-parlour too small for comfort?

"Our party is a small one," replied Mrs. Dashwood. "It is large enough for my daughter and myself, and it is seldom that we have any company."

"Still, a spacious room is much to be desired. I would never willingly dine in a room less than twenty feet long. Twenty feet or perhaps twenty-two. The feeling of being cramped for space is, I think, intolerable. I should recommend your throwing this room and the adjoining one together. You would then have a very handsome room, one of which you could be justly proud."

. . . . . .

Mrs. Dashwood mentioned the theatre, and Mr. Atherton hastened to inform her that Drury Lane was in the course of rebuilding, that Edmund Kean was the finest actor of the day, that Mrs. Siddons was growing old, that Lady Macbeth was undoubtedly her finest part, and that the theatre generally had undergone a change for the better in the past few years.

Mrs. Dashwood hardly knew what to do with so much information. She was attempting some reply when Margaret gently interposed with some remark about the new publications, and in a moment he was off again, talking of Scott,

of Campbell, of Lord Byron, and of Southey without intermission and without any real perception, till the ladies seized the opportunity of a moment's hesitation to rise from the table and leave him to his wine.

A Little Insolence and Incivility

The entrance of two pretty young women could not but be interesting to Robert, who stared at them until he was introduced, bowed, and then stared again.

Mrs. Ferrars remarked disparagingly that Margaret was very like Elinor. Robert, with the intention of being agreeable, remarked that his mother was wrong. Miss Margaret was better-looking than Elinor. Mrs. Dashwood maintained that she was right in thinking them very much alike—they were both pale and small—and Edward was called upon to decide on the relative beauty, or lack of beauty, of his wife and her sister.

Marianne had learnt something in her contact with the world of fashion. She knew that some forms of insolence were best met by a like incivility. She therefore called on Edward to decide whether the absent Fanny were most like her mother, Mrs. Ferrars, or her brother, Mr. Robert, and would have continued the discussion in detail, with comments on the shapes of noses and the expression of eyes, if Edward had not stopped it by some obvious remark about the impossibility of deciding on likenesses as every one saw them differently.

Mrs. Ferrars eyed her opponent with some degree of liking. This was much better than Elinor's quiet respect, Fanny's affectionate admiration, or even than Lucy's servile adulation. It was seldom that she met with a young woman who might very well be rude to her, if sufficiently annoyed. Margaret need only be ignored, but it could be expected

that there would be pleasure in contradicting Marianne, and even in being contradicted by her.

The next subject of conversation was the surprisingly early hour at which Edward dined. She had been unable to eat a dinner at four o'clock, and she could not take supper. Travelling was very uncomfortable if it entailed such irregular meals. Here again Marianne was ready for her. The time that Elinor and Edward had fixed for their dinner hour was exactly that chosen by the King and the Royal Family, having been recommended to the King by the Royal physician as being the best hour to ensure perfect health.

Who said anything about Love?

[From *Susan Price* or "Resolution."]

"Well, Susan," said Tom pleasantly as they began their homeward drive. "What do you say to Miss Crawford being my heiress? Twenty thousand pounds and a very agreeable handsome person! She is nearer my own age, too, than you are. More suitable in every way, do not you think? True, I do not care a rap for her, and she would never do more than tolerate me, but no doubt we should be a very happy couple for all that. She would like the prospect of being Lady Bertram, and I should like her handsome appearance and manners, and her pretty fortune. Do wish me luck, Susan. Why have you nothing to say?"

"I have had no opportunity to say anything, cousin. You have not waited for my reply. I should think it would be very wise in you to fall in love with Miss Crawford."

"Who said anything about love, Susan? I was talking about marriage. How can I carry on a conversation with you when we are not agreed about the subject? I ask you

if you think Miss Crawford would be a nice wife for me, and I an acceptable husband for her, and you go talking of my falling in love. You know whom I am in love with. I cannot be in love with two people at once."

"Are you sure you cannot? Sometimes it very nearly happened that you were."

"Now, Susan, you are being saucy. Do bear in mind that I am very much older than you are, and so of course very much wiser. You must not suppose that because I am in love with you, I think you very wise or right. I think on the contrary that you are very foolish not to have me, and quite wrong in thinking Miss Crawford would not."

"Cousin. I never said Miss Crawford would not have you, but I think she would expect you to be in love with her. I imagine she has always expected people to be in love with her, and I do not think she would marry any one who was not."

"Well, well, we shall see! That is if I decide to try my luck. For I am sure that I shall never be in love with any one but Susan Price, so Miss Crawford will have to take me or leave me at that."

"But Cousin——you surely do not really mean?"

"My meaning, Susan, is not for little girls to question. You have only to say one word to put a stop to anything of the sort. Is no one to have the pleasure of marrying me because you will not?"

Susan said no more, but a sly glance from Tom showed him that she was grave and thoughtful. He conversed cheerfully on indifferent topics during the remainder of the drive, and discussed politics with Sir Thomas at dinner in the most amiable manner. After dinner her aunt desired Susan's company and she saw no more of her cousin that day. . . .

The Fair Miss Crawford was at home, and ready to be

very gracious to the elder son of Sir Thomas Bertram and his pretty little cousin. . . . But who can say what went on in her mind? What of mischief, of sentimental recollection, of laughing foreshadowing, of regretful amusement? All that appeared was that she was in the highest spirits, and as ready to be charming to Susan Price and Tom Bertram as they were to be charmed by her. . . .

"Well?" said Tom as they returned in the curricle, after a long period of silence, "How do you think I progress? The lady was kind, unmistakably kind. You must, I think, be less doubtful of my success after this morning."

"Cousin, you are not serious. Somehow I am sure you are not serious. If you were——"

"Well, Susan, what if I were?"

"If you were, I think I should be very sorry. I do not like to think of you and Miss Crawford being married. I think she should be married to some one who loves her. It is not enough to admire her."

"And I? What sort of person would you have marry me? Have I any deserts in the matter? Do you not think I should have someone delightful for a wife?"

"I don't think I want you to be married at all, cousin. We are all so happy as we are. I think that any change would be for the worse."

Tom appeared to be considering this, for he made no reply, and they drove on in silence.

A very handsome Letter, in an elegant flowing hand

You will, I am sure, rejoice to be assured of the well-being of your three elder children, and as I am in a position to give you this information I hasten to put pen to paper for that purpose. It has been a true pleasure to Sir Thomas

and myself to have Fanny established at the Parsonage, and I sincerely trust she feels it to be as advantageous as it appears to us. We have the pleasure of constant visits from the children, your grandchildren, my dear sister, as they are mine, and think them very forward for their age and very amiable and well brought up. Maria, we think a decidedly pretty girl, and Edmund is very talented if somewhat bashful. He is four years of age, and Maria will be three next month. The baby Fanny is perhaps too young yet to show much promise, but she is an affectionate child and we must hope will grow up worthy of her dear parents. Your son William is as kind in his capacity of uncle as he is attentive in that of nephew. Sir Thomas and I feel real attachment to him, and wish him well wherever he goes. Your third child, your daughter Susan, is a fine well-grown girl, and has been much admired, especially at a ball which we had the pleasure of giving for her amusement, and which took place last evening. Susan looked remarkably well and danced with great spirit and grace. We must hope that the admiration she received will not turn her head, and sincerely trust that she will continue to be as agreeable as she is pleasing in appearance. You and I, my dear sister, who have been beauties in our time, know the dangers of good looks, and fear the temptations to which they lead. . . .

Susan is a very affectionate and valued companion, and her uncle and myself are sincerely grateful to you for sparing her to us for so long a time. If at any time you feel a desire to see her, I hope, my dear sister, you will communicate your wishes to me. Sir Thomas will send the chaise to convey you hither. It would be no inconvenience to us to do this, and I should benefit by the pleasure of your society. . . .

Our sister Norris is with us again, and is a great assistance

to me in the management of this large house, which of course entails considerable exertion on my part. I sincerely hope that she will be prevailed on to make us a long visit, and that her health will benefit from the air of Mansfield.

Our daughter Maria is now happily married. I have not yet had the pleasure of being made acquainted with her husband, but Sir Thomas saw him and was exceedingly pleased with him. It is strange, though, to think that he is an apothecary, as Maria always said she disliked apothecaries, but it is only another instance of the strange ways of Providence. We cannot conjecture the future, and what is in store for us, and can only sincerely trust that it is all for the best. At the same time I do think it very odd that Maria should marry an apothecary, but no doubt it only shows what a charming man he must be, and how truly and deeply she must be attached to him.

You will be tired of this long letter which I will now bring to a close with all the sincerest good wishes for your welfare and that of your husband and children.

I am, my dear sister, yours affectionately,

MARIA BERTRAM.

DRAMATISATIONS HAVE APPEARED

Duologues and Scenes from the Novels. By Rosina Filippi. 1895.
Pride and Prejudice. Founded on Jane Austen's novel by Mrs. Steele Mackenzie (French). 1906.
Life at Bath. By Fanny Johnson. 1909.
Two Dialogues. Curwen's edition. 1912:
"Lady Catherine" is annoyed with "Elizabeth Bennet."
"Mr. Collins proposes."
Pride and Prejudice. Four Acts. By Eileen H. A. and J. C. Squire. 1929.

APPENDIX D

OPINIONS

Although references have been often given, supported by brief quotations to opinions of Jane Austen privately expressed, in diaries or correspondence, by her contemporaries and by the men or women writers among the early Victorians, such evidence of comparatively early, appreciative criticism comes from scattered sources and loses something of its significance for lack of comparative combination.

I have brought together here what is probably the earliest "journal" allusion to fame, *immediately* following the publication of *Sense and Sensibility*, and a short series of spontaneous judgments, not intended for the public, by nearly all her fellow-craftswomen from Susan Ferrier to Mrs. Browning.

These last are not always complimentary, but they throw strong light on the reactions her pioneer womanliness produced in those who had also contributed to its inception or were carrying on the movement towards women's rights in literature.

The earliest "Encyclopaedia" notices of Jane Austen may be found in Mrs. Elwood's *Memoirs of Literary Ladies of England*, 1843, and (in U.S.A.) in *Woman's Record*, by Sarah Josepha Hale, 1853.

Lady Bessborough to Lord Gower

(November 25, 1811)

Have you read *Sense and Sensibility*? It is a clever novel. They were full of it at Althorp, and though it ends stupidly, I was much amused by it.

Private Correspondence of Lord Granville Gower.

Susan Ferrier to Miss Clavering

(1816)

I have been reading *Emma*, which is excellent; there is no story whatever and the heroine is no better than other people; but the characters are so true to life, and her style is so piquant, that it does not need the adventitious aids of mystery and adventure.

From Doyle's *Memoir and Correspondence of Susan Ferrier.*

Maria Edgeworth to Mrs. Ruxton

(February 21, 1818)

I entirely agree with you, my dearest aunt, on one subject, as indeed I generally do on most subjects, but particularly about *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion.* The behaviour of the General in *Northanger Abbey*, packing off the young lady without a servant or the common civilities which any bear of a man, not to say gentleman, would have shown, is quite outrageously out of drawing and out of nature. *Persuasion* —excepting the tangled, useless histories of the family in the first fifty pages—appears to me, especially in all that relates to poor Anne and her lover, to be exceeding interesting and natural. The love and the lover admirably

well drawn: don't you see Captain Wentworth, or rather don't you in her place feel him taking the boisterous child off her back as she kneels by the sick boy on the sofa? And is not the first meeting after their long separation admirably well done? And the overheard conversation about the nut? But I must stop: we have got no farther than the disaster of Miss Musgrove's jumping off the steps.

Life and Letters, I, 246, 247.

Mary Russell Mitford to Sir William Elford

(*December 20, 1814*)

The want of elegance is almost the only want in Miss Austen. I have not read her *Mansfield Park*; but it is impossible not to feel in every line of *Pride and Prejudice*, in every word of Elizabeth, the entire want of taste which could produce so pert, so worldly a heroine as the beloved of such a man as Darcy. Wickham is equally bad. Oh! they were just fit for each other, and I cannot forgive that delightful Darcy for parting them. Darcy should have married Jane. He is of all the admirable characters the best designed and the best sustained. I quite agree with you in preferring Miss Austen to Miss Edgeworth. If the former had a little more taste, a little more perception of the graceful, as well as of the humorous, I know not indeed any one to whom I should not prefer her. There is none of the hardness, the cold selfishness, of Miss Edgeworth about her writings; she is in a much better humour with the world; she preaches no sermons; she wants nothing but the *beau-idéal* of the female character to be a perfect novel writer; and perhaps even that *beau-idéal* would only be missed by such a *petite maîtresse* in books as myself, who would never admit a muse into my library till she had been taught to dance by the Graces.

In Bath, whenever it rained . . . I thought of Anne

Elliott meeting Captain Wentworth. . . . Whenever I got out of breath climbing uphill I thought of that same charming Anne Elliott, and of that ascent from the lower town to the upper, during which all her tribulations cease. . . . I doubt if any one, even Scott himself, has left such perfect impressions of character and place as Jane Austen.

Recollections, II, 48.

Miss Mitford once said to Mr. Austen-Leigh: "I would almost cut off one of my hands if it would enable me to write like your aunt with the other."

Memoir by J. E. Austen-Leigh.

Harriet Martineau

(1820)

Jane Austen herself, the queen of novelists, the immortal creator of Anne Elliott, Mr. Knightley, and a score or two more of unrivalled intimate friends of the whole public.

(1832)

In my childhood most people delighted in Mrs. Radcliffe's gorgeous or luscious generalities . . . because we had no conception of detail like Miss Austen's in manners, and Miss Mitford's in scenery. . . . Miss Austen had claim to other and greater honours, but she and Miss Mitford deserve no small gratitude for rescuing us from the folly and bad taste of slovenly indefiniteness in delineation. She was a glorious novelist. *Autobiography.*

Charlotte Brontë to G. H. Lewes

(January 12, 1848)

Why do you like Jane Austen so very much? I am puzzled on that point. What induced you to say that you would rather have written *Pride and Prejudice* or *Tom Jones*

than any of the Waverley novels? I had not seen *Pride and Prejudice* till I read that sentence of yours, then I got the book. And what did I find? An accurate daguerreotyped portrait of a commonplace face; a carefully fenced, highly-cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of a bright, vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck. I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen in their elegant but confined houses. . . .

She [George Sand] is sagacious and profound. Miss Austen is only shrewd and observant.

(*January 18, 1849*)

You say I must familiarize my mind with the fact that Miss Austen is not a poetess, has no sentiment, no eloquence, none of the ravishing enthusiasm of poetry, and then you add I *must* learn to acknowledge her as *one of the greatest artists, of the greatest painters of human character*, and one of the writers with the nicest sense of means to an end that ever lived. The last point only will I acknowledge. Can there be a great artist without poetry? Miss Austen, as you say, being without sentiment, without poetry, maybe *is* sensible (more *real* than *true*), but she cannot be great.

To W. S. Williams

(*April 12, 1850*)

. . . Jane Austen does her business of delineating the surface of the lives of genteel English people curiously well. There is a Chinese fidelity, a miniature delicacy in the painting. She ruffles her reader by nothing vehement, disturbs him by nothing profound. The passions are perfectly unknown to her; she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy sisterhood. Even to the feelings she vouchsafes no more than an occasional graceful but distant

recognition — too frequent converse with them would ruffle the smooth elegance of her progress. Her business is not half so much with the human heart as with the human eyes, mouth, hands, and feet. . . . If this is heresy, I cannot help it.

From *Charlotte Brontë and her Circle*,
by Clement Shorter, p. 399.

Mrs. Browning to Ruskin

(*November 5, 1855*)

She [Miss Mitford] never taught me anything but a very limited admiration of Miss Austen, whose people struck me as wanting souls, even more than is necessary for men and women of the world. The novels are perfect as far as they go—that 's certain. Only they don't go far, I think. It may be my fault.

Letters of Mrs. Browning, ed. by G. Kenyon.

Miss Thackeray

Dear books, bright sparkling with wit and animation, in which the homely heroines charm, the dull hours fly, and the very bores are enchanting.

REVIEWS

Though lists have been compiled, most of them now embodied in Mr. Keynes' Bibliography, the first, so to speak, official news reviews, communicated to me by Mr. C. B. Hogan of Vermont, have hitherto escaped notice. They have a certain value, which is unique, as showing us how the new writer first struck a critic, through whose hands contemporary fiction was continually passing for judgment. They are, perhaps, a little *more* discerning than one might expect, considering the unheroic nature of the work. To-day,

however, we should unmercifully deride any attack upon the moral teaching of *Persuasion*!

The "Scott" and "Whately" reviews were published anonymously and are, in the same way, "official" judgments upon a new writer. But the *Quarterly* expected more considered criticism and, in this case, secured men of outstanding knowledge and discrimination to pronounce it. Scott was privately more understanding and enthusiastic—at any rate a few years later—than in his formal review; but there he recognized, long before it was anywhere else perceived, the significance of her position in the historic development of the English novel. His article is a contribution to the history of English literature which, so far as it goes, is now universally accepted for discerning truth. Whately quotes Scott over the editorial "we," as if he had also written the earlier article, and develops his theme; concluding, however, with more unqualified praise of Jane Austen.

Later reviews, here quoted, afford special evidence of her growing reputation, because included in notices of other books, or general estimates of contemporary fiction. Mr. Hogan learned from the publishers that certain reviews, published anonymously, were by George Henry Lewes: and from his enthusiasm, beside George Eliot's, we can be certain of just what Jane Austen meant to the inner circle of intelligenzia and the cultured, professional, criticism of *their* day and generation.

First Review

Sense and Sensibility. A Novel: in three Volumes. By a Lady. 12mo. Egerton. 1812. 15s.

We think ſo favourably of this performance that it is with ſome reluctance we decline inſerting it among our principal

articles, but the productions of the preſs are ſo continually multiplied, that it requires all our exertions to keep tolerable pace with them.

The object of the work is to repreſent the effects on the conduct of life, of diſcreet quiet good ſenſe on the one hand, and an over-refined and exceſſive ſuſceptibility on the other. The characters are happily delineated and admirably ſuſtained. Two ſiſters are placed before the reader, ſimilarly circumſtanced in point of education and accomplishments, expoſed to ſimilar trials, but the one by a ſober exertion of prudence and judgment ſuſtains with fortitude, and overcomes with ſucceſs, what plunges the other into an abyſs of vexation, ſorrow, and diſappointment. An intimate knowledge of life and of the female character is exemplified in the various perſonages and incidents which are introduced, and nothing can be more happily pourtrayed than the picture of the elder brother, who required by his dying father, to aſſiſt his mother and ſiſters, firſt reſolves to give the ſiſters a thouſand pounds a-piece, but after a certain deliberation with himself, and dialogue with his *amiable* wife, perſuades himſelf that a little fiſh and game occaſionally ſent, will fulfil the real intentions of his father, and ſatisfy every obligation of duty. Not leſs excellent is the picture of the young lady of over exquiſite ſenſibility, who falls immediately and violently in love with a male coquet, without liſtening to the judicious expoſtulations of her ſenſible ſiſter, and believing it impoſſible for man to be fickle, falſe, and treacherous. We will, however, detain our female friends no longer than to aſſure them, that they may peruſe theſe volumes not only with ſatisfaction but with real benefit, for they may learn from them, if they pleaſe, many ſober and ſalutary maxims for the conduct of life, exemplified in a very pleaſing and entertaining narrative. There is a little perplexity in the genealogy of the firſt

chapter, and the reader is ſomewhat bewildered among half-ſiſters, couſins, and ſo forth; perhaps, too, the good humoured Baronet, who is never happy but with his houſe full of people, is rather overcharged, but for theſe trifling defects there is ample compenſation.

The British Critic, May 1812.

First Review

Pride and Prejudice, a Novel, in three Volumes. By the Author of Senſe and Senſibility. 12mo. 3 Vols. 18s. Egerton. 1813

We had occaſion to ſpeak favorably of the former production of this author or authoreſs, ſpecified above, and we readily do the ſame of the preſent. It is very far ſuperior to almoſt all the publications of the kind which have lately come before us. It has a very unexceptional tendency, the ſtory is well told, the characters remarkably well drawn and ſupported, and written with great ſpirit as well as vigour. The ſtory has no great variety, it is ſimply this. The hero is a young man of large fortune and faſhionable manners, whoſe diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic is perſonal pride. The heroine, on the firſt introduction, conceives a moſt violent prejudice againſt Darcy, which a variety of circumſtances well imagined and happily repreſented, tend to ſtrengthen and confirm. The under plot is an attachment between the friend of Darcy and the elder ſiſter of the principal female character; other perſonages, of greater or leſs intereſt and importance, complete the dramatis personæ, ſome of whoſe characters are exceedingly well drawn. Explanations of the different perplexities and ſeeming contrarieties, are gradually unfolded, and the two principal performers are happily united.

Of the characters, Elizabeth Bennet, the heroine, is ſupported with great ſpirit and conſiſtency throughout; there ſeems no defect in the portrait; this is not preciſely the caſe with Darcy her lover; his eaſy unconcern and faſhionable indifference, ſomewhat abruptly changes to the ardent lover. The character of Mr. Collins, the obſequious rector, is excellent. Fancy preſents us with many ſuch, who conſider the patron of exalted rank as the model of all that is excellent on earth, and the patron's ſmiles and condeſcenſion as the ſum of human happineſs. Mr. Bennet, the father of Elizabeth, preſents us with ſome novelty of character; a reſerved, acute, and ſatirical, but indolent perſonage, who ſees and laughs at the follies and indiſcretions of his dependents, without making any exertions to correct them. The picture of the younger Miſs Bennets, their perpetual viſits to the market town where officers are quartered, and the reſult, is perhaps exemplified in every provincial town in the kingdom.

It is unneceſſary to add, that we have peruſed theſe volumes with much ſatisfaction and amuſement, and entertain very little doubt that their ſucceſsful circulation will induce the author to ſimilar exertions.

The British Critic, February 1813.

Early Reviews (just after Scott)

Emma. By the author of "Pride and Prejudice." A novel in 3 volumes. 12mo. £1 1s. *Murray.* 1816

Whoever is fond of an amuſing, inoffenſive, and well-principled novel, will be well pleaſed with the peruſal of *Emma.* It rarely happens that in a production of this nature we have ſo little to find fault with.

In few novels is the unity of place preſerved: we know not

of one in which the author has sufficient art to give interest to the circle of a small village. The author of *Emma* never goes beyond the boundaries of two private families, but has contrived in a very interesting manner to detail their history, and to form out of so slender materials a very pleasing tale. The characters are well kept up to the end. The valetudinarian father's, the chattering village belles', are all preserved to the life. . . . [Long quotation.]

We are not the less inclined to speak well of this tale, because it does not dabble in religion; of fanatical novels and of fanatical authors we are already sick.

The British Critic, July 1816.

If this novel can scarcely be called a composition, because it contains but one ingredient, that one is, however, of sterling worth; being a strain of genuine natural humour, such as is seldom found conjointly with the complete purity of images and ideas, which is here conspicuous. The character of Mr. Woodhouse, with his "habits of gentle selfishness," is admirably drawn, and the dialogue is easy and natural.

The fair reader may also glean some useful hints against romantic schemes, or indulging a spirit of patronage in defiance of sober reason; and the work will probably become a favourite with all those who seek for harmless amusement rather than deep pathos, or appalling horror, in works of fiction.

Monthly Review, July 1816.

(*Emma* was also noticed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1816.)

First Review

Northanger Abbey and *Persuasion*: By the author of Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, etc. With a biographical Notice of the Author. 4 Vols. 12mo. 24*s*. Murray.

With respect to the talents of Jane Austen, they need no other voucher, than the works which she has left behind her; which in some of the best qualities of the best sort of novels, display a degree of excellence that has not been often surpassed. In imagination, of all kinds, she appears to have been extremely deficient; not only her stories are utterly and entirely devoid of invention, but her characters, her incidents, her sentiments, are obviously all drawn exclusively from experience. The sentiments which she puts into the mouths of her actors, are the sentiments, which we are every day in the habit of hearing; and as to her actors themselves, we are persuaded that fancy, strictly so called, has had much less to do with them, than with the characters of Julius Caesar, Hannibal, or Alexander, as represented to us by historians. At description she seldom aims; at that vivid and poetical sort of description, which we have of late been accustomed to, (in the novels of a celebrated anonymous writer) never; she seems to have no other object in view, than simply to paint some of those scenes which she has herself seen, and which every one, indeed, may witness daily. Not only her characters are all of them belonging to the middle size [class?], and with a tendency, in fact, rather to fall below, than to rise above the common standard, but even the incidents of her novels, are of the same description. Her heroes and heroines make love and are married, just as her readers make love, and were or will be, married; no unexpected ill fortune occurs to prevent, nor any unexpected good fortune, to bring about

the events on which her novels hinge. She seems to be describing such people as meet together every night, in every respectable house in London; and to relate such incidents as have probably happened, one time or other, to half the families in the United Kingdom. And yet, by a singular good judgment, almost every individual represents a class; not a class of humourists, or of any of the rarer specimens of our species, but one of those classes to which we ourselves, and every acquaintance we have, in all probability belong. The fidelity with which these are distinguished is often admirable. It would have been impossible to discriminate the characters of the commonplace people, whom she employs as the instruments of her novels, by any set and formal descriptions; for the greater part of them, are such as we generally describe by saying that they are persons of "no characters at all." Accordingly our authoress gives no definitions; but she makes her *dramatis personæ* talk; and the sentiments which she places in their mouths, the little phrases which she makes them use, strike so familiarly upon our memory as soon as we hear them repeated, that we instantly recognize among some of our acquaintance, the sort of persons she intends to signify, as accurately as if we had heard their voices. This is the forte of our authoress; as soon as ever she leaves the shore of her own experience, and attempts to delineate fancy characters, or such as she may perhaps have often heard of, but possibly never seen, she falls at once to the level of mere ordinary novelists. Her merit consists altogether in her remarkable talent for observation; no ridiculous phrase, no affected sentiment, no foolish pretension seems to escape her notice. It is scarcely possible to read her novels, without meeting with some of one's own absurdities reflected back upon one's conscience; and this, just in the light in which they ought to appear. For in recording the customs

and manners of common-place people, in the common-place intercourse of life, our authoress never dips her pen in satire; the follies which she holds up to us, are, for the most part, mere follies, or else natural imperfections; and she treats them, as such, with good-humoured pleasantry; mimicking them so exactly, that we always laugh at the ridiculous truth of the imitation, but without ever being incited to indulge in feelings, that might tend to render us ill-natured, and intolerant in society. This is the result of that good sense which seems ever to keep complete possession over all the other qualities of the mind of our authoress; she sees every thing just as it is; even her want of imagination (which is the principal defect of her writings) is useful to her in this respect, that it enables her to keep clear of all exaggeration, in a mode of writing where the least exaggeration would be fatal; for if the people and the scenes which she has chosen, as the subjects of her composition, be not painted with perfect truth, with exact and striking resemblance, the whole effect ceases; her characters have no kind of merit in themselves, and whatever interest they excite in the mind of the reader, results almost entirely, from the unaccountable pleasure which, by a peculiarity in our nature, we derive from a simple imitation of any object, without any reference to the abstract value or importance of the object itself. . . . [Here follows a summary of *Northanger Abbey*.]

With respect to the second of the novels, which the present publication contains, it will be necessary to say but little. It is in every respect a much less fortunate performance than that which we have just been considering. It is manifestly the work of the same mind, and contains parts of very great merit; among them, however, we certainly should not number its *moral*, which seems to be, that young people should always marry according to their own inclinations and upon their own judgment; for that if in

consequence of listening to grave counsels, they defer their marriage, till they have wherewith to live upon, they will be laying the foundation for years of misery, such as only the heroes and heroines of novels can reasonably hope even to see the end of.

The British Critic, March 1818.

(Also reviewed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1818:)

"The two novels now published have no connexion with each other. The characters in both are principally taken from the middle ranks of life, and are well supported. Northanger Abbey, however, is decidedly preferable to the second novel, not only in the incidents, but even in its moral tendency."

George Henry Lewes

Surely no man has surpassed Miss Austen as a delineator of common life? Her range, to be sure, is limited; but her art is perfect. She does not touch those profounder and more impassioned chords which vibrate to the heart's core —never ascends to its grand or heroic movements, nor descends to its deeper throes and agonies; but in all she attempts she is uniformly and completely successful.

It is curious too, and worthy of a passing remark, that women have achieved success in every department of fiction but that of *humour*. They deal, no doubt, in sly humorous touches often enough; but the broad provinces of that great domain are almost uninvaded by them; beyond the outskirts, and open borders, they have never ventured to pass. Compare Miss Austen, Miss Ferrier, and Miss Edgeworth, with the lusty mirth and riotous humour of Shakespeare, Rabelais, Butler, Swift, Fielding, Smollett, or Dickens and

Thackeray. It is like comparing a quiet smile with the inextinguishable "laughter" of the Homeric gods!

Edinburgh Review, January 1850.

From article on "Shirley."

Tom Jones, so far from being a masterpiece of construction, is, in truth, a very ill-constructed novel. *Pride and Prejudice* is a finely constructed work and shows what a fine artistic sense Miss Austen had. The ease and naturalness of the evolution of the story are so perfect, that only very critical readers are aware of its skill in selection. Take it to pieces, examine the characters, scenes, and dialogues, in relation to each other and to the story, and you will find that there is nothing superfluous—that all this variety is secretly tending to one centre; that all this ease of nature, which looks so like the ordinary life of everyday, is subordinate to the principles of economy and selection; and that nothing is dragged in, nothing is superfluous.

Blackwoods, March 1860.

From article on "Tom Jones."

(Lewes also wrote the article on the "Novels of Jane Austen" in *Blackwoods*, July 1859.)

George Eliot

First and foremost let Jane Austen be named, the greatest artist that has ever written, using the term to signify the most perfect mastery over the means to her end. There are heights and depths in human nature Miss Austen has never scaled nor fathomed, there are worlds of passionate existence into which she has never set foot; but although this is obvious to every reader, it is equally obvious that she has risked no failures by attempting to delineate that which she had not seen. Her circle may be restricted, but it is

complete. Her world is a perfect orb, and vital. Life, as it presents itself to an English gentlewoman peacefully yet actively engaged in her quiet village, is mirrored in her works with a purity and fidelity that must endow them with interest for all time. To read one of her books is like an actual experience of life: you know the people as if you had lived with them, and you feel something of personal affection towards them. The marvellous reality and subtle distinctive traits noticeable in her portraits has led Macaulay to call her a prose Shakespeare. If the whole force of the distinction which lies in that epithet *prose* be fairly appreciated, no one, we think, will dispute the compliment; for out of Shakespeare it would be difficult to find characters so typical yet so nicely demarcated within the limits of their kind. We do not find such profound psychological insight as may be found in George Sand (not to mention male writers), but taking the type to which the characters belong, we see the most intimate and accurate knowledge in all Miss Austen's creations.

Only cultivated minds fairly appreciate the exquisite art of Miss Austen. Those who demand the stimulus of "effects"; those who can only see by strong lights and shadows, will find her tame and uninteresting. We may illustrate this by one detail. Lucy Steele's bad English, so delicately and truthfully indicated, would in the hands of another have been more obvious, more "effective" in its exaggeration, but the loss of this comic effect is more than replaced to the cultivated reader by his relish of the nice discrimination visible in its truthfulness. And so of the rest. *Strong* lights are unnecessary, *true* lights being at command. The incidents, the characters, the dialogue—all are of everyday life, and so truthfully presented, that to appreciate the art we must try to imitate it, or carefully compare it with that of others.

We are but echoing an universal note of praise in speaking thus highly of her works, and it is from no desire of simply swelling that chorus of praise that we name her here, but to call attention to the peculiar excellence at once womanly and literary which has earned this reputation. Of all imaginative writers she is the most *real*. Never does she transcend her own actual experience, never does her pen trace a line that does not touch the experience of others. Herein we recognize the first quality of literature. We recognize the second and more special quality of womanliness in the tone and point of view; they are novels written by a woman, an Englishwoman, a gentlewoman; no signature could disguise that fact; and because she has so faithfully (although unconsciously) kept to her own womanly point of view, her works are durable. There is nothing of the *doctrinaire* in Jane Austen; not a trace of woman's "mission"; but as the most truthful, charming, humorous, pure-minded, quick-witted, and unexaggerated of writers, female literature has reasons to be proud of her.

Westminster Review, July 1852.
From article on "The Lady Novelists." [1]

[1] In somewhat startling contrast with George Eliot's later scathing essay on "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" in the same Review.

APPENDIX E

LIST OF WRITINGS
and
TIME TABLE OF WORK

With Earliest "Announcements" never before collected

ANNOUNCED.

This day was published, in 3 vols., 12 mo., price 15s., boards, *Sense and Sensibility*, a novel, By a Lady. Published by Thomas Egerton, Whitehall. And may be had of every bookseller in the United Kingdom.

Star, October 30, 1811.

Sense and Sensibility: A novel. In three volumes. By A Lady. 1811. 15s.

[Written in Letters with title *Elinor and Marianne* about 1795; but "it is difficult to guess between whom the letters can have passed, for in the novel 'the sisters' are never parted even for a single day." Revision under its present title begun November 1797 (Cassandra). Prepared for Press 1809–10.]

ANNOUNCED.

In three volumes, price 18s. in boards. *Pride and Prejudice* : a Novel. By a Lady, the author of Sense and Sensibility. Printed for T. Egerton, near Whitehall.

Morning Chronicle, January 28, 1813.

Pride and Prejudice : A Novel. In three volumes. By the Author of *Sense and Sensibility*. Printed for T. Egerton, Military Library, Whitehall. 1813. 18s.

[Written with title *First Impressions* October 1796–August 1797 (Cassandra), and, in that form, offered to Cadell for publication at the author's risk, but declined by return of post. Revision under present title 1810–12.]

ANNOUNCED.

This day was published, in 3 vols., price 18s. in boards. *Mansfield Park*, a Novel, by the Author of Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice. Printed for T. Egerton. Military Library, Whitehall, where the former works may also be had. *Star*, May 9, 1814.

Mansfield Park: A Novel. In three volumes. By the author of "Sense and Sensibility" and "Pride and Prejudice." Printed for T. Egerton, Military Library, Whitehall. 1814. 18s.

[Begins somewhere about February 1811. Finished soon after June 1813 (Jane).]

ANNOUNCED.

In a few days will be published, in 3 vols, 12mo. *Emma*, a Novel—By the Author of "Pride and Prejudice." Printed for John Murray, Albemarle Street.
Morning Post, December 2, 1815.

Emma: A Novel. In Three Volumes. By the author of *Pride and Prejudice*, etc., etc. London: Printed for John Murray. 1816. £1 1 0.

["Between Jan. 21, ~~1814 and April 1815~~, Finished March 29, 1815" (Jane)].

ANNOUNCED.

On Saturday, Dec. 20, will be published, in 4 vols. 12mo. 24s. *Northanger Abbey*, a Romance: and *Persuasion*, a novel. By the Author of "Pride and Prejudice," "Mansfield Park," etc., with a Biographical notice of the author. Printed for John Murray, Albemarle Street. *Courier*, December 17, 1817.

Northanger Abbey: *and Persuasion.* By the author of "Pride and Prejudice," "Mansfield Park," etc. With a Biographical Notice of the Author. In four volumes, London: John Murray, Albemarle Street. 1818. £1 4s.

[*Northanger Abbey.* Written with title *Susan* between 1797 and 1798 (Cassandra). Revised for press and sold to Messrs. Crosby & Co., of Stationers' Hall Court,[1] 1804, who announced it for publication in their "Flowers of Literature," 1803, but did not publish it. In April 1809 a letter was addressed to Crosby over signature M. A. D., assuming that the MS. had been lost and offering another copy for immediate publication. Crosby, however, replied that they were under no obligation to publish and "would take proceedings to stop the sale by any one else," but offered to return it for the £10 they had originally paid for it. Sometime in 1816, after the publication of *Emma*, the matter was reopened, and the repurchase was negotiated, Crosby not suspecting that the author had already brought out four novels with some success. The title was now changed to *Catherine*, on recalling the unpleasant character of *Lady Susan* and the charms of *Kitty or the Bower*,[2]) and the manuscript was prepared for press with an "advertisement" apologizing for those parts of the work "which thirteen years have made comparatively obsolete," but on March 13, 1817, she wrote, "*Miss Catherine* is put upon the shelf," and, being apparently not quite satisfied about the book, never took it up again. Henry was responsible for *both* the titles used for publication, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion.*]

[*Persuasion.* Begun August 8, 1815. Finished August 6, 1816 (Jane). She had written *Finis* to her MS. on July 18, after which she felt dissatisfied with what was then chapter x of the second volume, and replaced it by the present chapters, x and xi. The cancelled chapter was printed in the *Memoir*; reprinted in the Oxford edition of the novels and, as a separate slim volume, with present last chapter, by the Oxford Press in 1926.]

THE TEXT

Jane Austen, clearly, was not a skilled proof-reader, and where more than one edition was published in her lifetime, comparisons have shown that the later text was not

[1] By some accident, the author of the *Memoir* ascribes this purchase and subsequent neglect to "a publisher in Bath," whom later enthusiasts have ventured to identify as one Ball.

[2] In the *Life and Letters*, a more prosaic reason for the change is suggested: the appearance of a novel called *Susan* by John Booth in 1809.

necessarily the most reliable. The first complete edition (Standard Novels, Bentley, 1833) was, no doubt, carefully prepared and subsequently emended, to be what long remained the standard " Library " edition; with the *Memoir*, *Lady Susan*, and *The Watsons* added in 1871; and taking final shape in the Steventon Edition of 1882.

Ten years later, in 1892, I prepared the first " independent " text, from life-time editions, for the first popular reprint of the novels, published by Messrs. Dent, reissued in Everyman's Library and elsewhere: a text revised in my own Hampshire edition of 1902. Messrs. W. and R. A. Austen-Leigh compared these various texts, with hints from Dr. Verrall's criticisms, in an Appendix to their *Life and Letters*.

A final text, based on full collation of all the early editions, with variorum readings in "Notes," and much other information with indexes and chronologies, etc., has been edited by Mr. R. W. Chapman for the Clarendon Press 1923 and 1926.

Manuscripts and Fragments

It seems practically certain that Jane Austen collected, or selected, the stories that she valued for any reason, of those written before she was sixteen, in three volumes. We know details of II and III, which are still in existence, and she is not likely to have so numbered them unless the first was then in her hands.

Vol. I is, however, only inferential, but it seems to have been known to the author of the *Memoir*, as he says that Vol. III "seems to mark a second stage in her literary education." We therefore conjecture that Vol. I contained:

The Mystery. "As complete as any of its kind." Printed in the *Memoir*. And others only *named* in the *Memoir*.

Jack and Alice.
Adventures of Mr. Harley. } Soon after 1788.

Henry and Eliza. Before the end of 1792.

The Visit and other Pieces.

Vol. II in the possession of Mrs. Saunders, daughter of the Rev. Edward Austen (ninth child of Francis), and published, under title *Love and Freindship and other Early Tales*, now first printed from the original MS. with Preface by G. K. Chesterton, 1922.

Love and Freindship in Letters. Finished June 13, 1790.

Lesley Castle in Letters. The first dated January 3, 1792.

The History of England. Finished Saturday, November 26, 1791.

A Collection of Letters.
Scraps. } Undated.

[Mrs. Saunders tells me that this volume of 252 pages is bound in white vellum, now yellow and very thin, though originally like stiff cardboard. The cover measures 8 inches by 6½ inches, and the words "Volume the Second" are written in ink on the back side cover. Also where the last page (140) of the printed volume reads "Finis," the words of the manuscript are "End of the Second Volume."]

Vol. III described in the *Memoir*. This manuscript is in existence and has been seen by Mr. Chapman.

Here again "Volume the Third" is written on the outside, and the contents are given the general title:

"Effusions of Fancy by a very Young Lady,
consisting of Tales entirely New."

Evelyn is said to be pure extravaganza, and is dedicated to Miss Mary Lloyd (James's second wife).

Kitty or the Bower. Dedication, to Miss Austen, dated August 1792. This unfinished story, as outlined in the *Memoir*, has points of resemblance to *Northanger Abbey*, besides the title, or heroine's name.

[Mr. Austen-Leigh also possesses a manuscript of from forty to fifty

pages, copied "from Miss Austen's Writings" by his aunt, Mary Austen-Leigh (daughter of the author of the *Memoir*), which contains:

The Three Sisters, an unfinished novel respectfully inscribed to Edward ——, Esq., by his obedient humble servant the author.

The Beautiful Cassandra, a novel in twelve chapters inscribed to Miss Austen (mentioned in Dedication to *Kitty*, above).

The Adventures of Mr. Harley, a short but interesting tale "with all imaginable respect inscribed to Mr. Francis William Austen, midshipman on board her Majesty's ship *Perseverance* by his obedient servant the author" (mentioned in the *Memoir*).

Edgar and Emma, a tale. To Miss Jane Anna Elizabeth Austen.[1] My dear niece, though you are at this period not many degrees removed from infancy. I am, my dear niece, your very affectionate aunt the author. June 2nd, 1793.

This includes two stories not mentioned elsewhere. Mr. Chapman gives a list of other MSS. in verse, in his reprints of *The Watsons* and of the *Memoir*, 1926, and other, small, items, in *The Times Literary Supplement*, January 14, 1926.]

Lady Susan in Letters. In the *Memoir*. 2nd edition. 1871.

[Written about 1805. And reprinted from collation with original manuscript in 1925: Clarendon Press. This manuscript was left to Fanny Knight, and is a fair copy, beautifully written, with few corrections or erasures. The date, however, is conjectural from watermark on paper, and it was probably written later.]

The Watsons. A fragment. In the *Memoir*. 2nd edition. 1871.

[Written, as Mrs. Brown believes, for a good reason, in 1807, and reprinted from collation with original manuscript in 1927. Clarendon Press. Manuscript is evidently a draft, much corrected. Of this MS. the first six leaves—each leaf containing two pages—are now in the Pierpont-Morgan library and the remainder in the possession of Miss Austen-Leigh, *except* for one leaf presented by Mrs. Massingbird to the Pioneer Club, now framed and hanging in the sitting-room. Neither Mr. Austen-Leigh nor Mr. Chapman know under what circumstances this leaf became detached.]

Charades, etc. Written a hundred years ago. By Jane Austen and her family. June 1895.

[This collection was sold at a bazaar for St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, and reprinted in Mary Augusta Austen-Leigh's *Personal Aspect*

[1] This is Anna (Mrs. Lefroy).

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